



THE INDEPENDENT

N° 3139

MONDAY 11 NOVEMBER 1996

WEATHER: Bright with showers

40p



The Tabloid

Martin Guerre
lives again

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Network

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Comment

Polly Toynbee:
D.I.V.O.R.C.E
page 13

Blair to come out on voting reform

Rontoul
al Correspondent

Blair, the Labour leader, is expected to declare his hand before the general election on the question of changing the system for electing MPs.

He will come under pressure to spell out where he stands as talks get under way between senior Labour and Liberal Democrat figures on plans for the referendum on electoral reform which Labour has promised.

Indications that Mr Blair will clarify his personal views come amid growing signs of party-munity co-operation between Labour and the Liberal

Blair is in the happy position of seeing Labour's selfish sectional interest coincide with the interest of our democracy as a whole.

He must, surely, be beginning to realise what he should do... take a deep breath and lunge towards reform.

— Leading article page 11

Democrats for whom "fair" voting system is a central demand. The offices of Mr Blair and Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, regularly consult each other before the twice-weekly Prime Minister's Questions in the Commons. The Independent has learned,

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Women, advocating change. Backbench supporters of electoral reform were delighted when Tory MPs started to sign Mr Patchett's motion.

Earlier this year several of those close to Mr Blair signalled their support for allowing voters to mark ballot papers with numbers in order of preference, a system called the Alternative Vote which would boost the Liberal Democrats without giving them full PR. This compromise is believed to be acceptable to Jack Straw, Labour's home affairs spokesman, who would be responsible for the legislation in government.

A senior adviser to Mr Ashdown confirmed yesterday that there were discussions between he and Mr Blair before each Tuesday and Thursday session, resulting in co-ordinated opposition attack on the government. Mr Ashdown wants to ensure that his question is covered by the broadcasters, which usually means it has to be on the same subject as Mr Blair's. Mr Ashdown followed up Mr Blair's most recent clash with John Major, last Tuesday, with a sharper version of the same question on the health service.

The pace of Lib-Lab co-operation has accelerated markedly this parliamentary session. It opened with a joint call by Donald Dewar and Archie Kirkwood, the two parties' chief whips, for tougher action on sleaze. Until then, there had been only one joint news conference, in January, when the foreign affairs spokesmen, Robin Cook and Menzies Campbell attacked the government over the Scots Report on the sale of arms to Iraq.

But at the end of last month Mr Cook and Robert MacLennan, the Liberal Democrat president, announced a joint committee of both parties to thrash out a "common programme" of democratic reforms for after the election.

Jack Straw and Alex Carlile, the two parties' home affairs spokesmen, last week presented to the Home Office joint plans to ban combat knives, and both parties have called for a ban on the private use of handguns.

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news

significant shorts

Athletes set to cash in on lottery

Olympic hopefuls could be paid tax-free salaries from lottery funds of up to £28,000 a year in a move that may help avoid a repeat of the embarrassingly poor show by British athletes in Atlanta.

The idea is part of a plan that the Sports Council is reported to be considering for a £25m grant from the National Lottery.

Athletes would be measured to ensure the money went to those in most need of financial support. Their annual payments would be awarded on a sliding scale related directly to achievement and potential and based on international and national rankings. Nominations would be made by the governing bodies of each sport. *Clare Garner*

Priest hurt in knife attack

Police in north-west Scotland are hunting a knife attacker who slashed the face of church minister during a Remembrance service in the Highland village of Scourie. The Rev James Macpherson, 41, was leading prayers at the village war memorial just after the two-minutes silence when he was slashed across the cheek by a man wielding a long-bladed knife, causing a wound that required 16 stiches.

Mawhinney on offensive

Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative party chairman, sought last night to exploit the resignation of the Labour candidate for the pending by-election in Wirral South.

Ian Wingfield resigned last week as candidate for the Merseyside seat left vacant by the death last weekend of Conservative MP Barry Porter.

Mr Mawhinney said that, if true, newspaper reports that Mr Wingfield had been violent towards his girlfriend and former wife made a "mockery of New Labour's claim to be the party of family values". *John Rentoul*

Cornwall hit by earthquake

West Cornwall was yesterday hit by the area's biggest earthquake for 15 years.

The British Geological Survey said the tremor was felt in towns and villages from Padstow to Land's End, and measured 3.8 on the Richter scale.

Police stations were inundated with calls, but there were no reports of injuries or major damage.

Britain experienced its worst quake in 1931. Centred on Dogger Bank in the North Sea, it registered 6.1 on the Richter scale.

TV diet 'fails health test'

Almost all foods advertised on television aimed at children are high in fat, sugar or salt, according to a new study.

Consumers International, a federation of 215 consumer organisations in more than 90 countries, found that confectionery, breakfast cereals and fast-food restaurants accounted for more than half of all food advertisements on television. "Most governments and the World Health Organisation are trying to promote the importance of healthy, balanced diets, especially for children," said Lucy Harris, of Consumers International. "This report shows that TV food advertising essentially undermines that message."

Alarm call for schools

The school day would start earlier under plans drawn up by a key Labour adviser.

Professor Michael Barber, who is leading Labour's literacy task force, is proposing an 8am start to the secondary school day. The morning would be given to formal lessons, leaving an afternoon session - up to around 4pm - devoted to "broader learning".

Professor Barber is due to unveil the plan tomorrow at a London conference organised by Community Service Volunteers.

Memo shows Heseltine wanted civil servants to find supporters

John Rentoul
Political Correspondent

Civil servants were asked by Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, to round up Conservative sympathisers in the public services.

A leaked Cabinet Office memo, dated 19 August but leaked yesterday, makes it clear that the initiative was set up by Mr Heseltine in July and approved by the Prime Minister.

Responding to press reports that Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary, had blocked the use of officials to recruit "cheerleaders" for the Tories, which would have breached civil service rules, Mr Heseltine said: "The moment I was aware of my return from holiday in September, that a proposal could be open to such a suggestion, I issued instructions that on such practice was acceptable."

But the memo says that in July Mr Heseltine "proposed

In his memo of 24 July to the Prime Minister, Sir John Major, the Deputy Prime Minister proposed that departments should identify service providers who could be vigorous and attractive proponents of Government policies. The memo said: "Such a proposal could be made known to the media, to facilitate maximum reporting of developments, and departments should supply them with necessary material to facilitate maximum reporting of developments. Ministers should consider how best to achieve in their areas and let EDCP know what they do."

A detail from the leaked Cabinet Office memorandum

that departments should identify service providers who could be vigorous proponents of Government policies". Their names could be made known to the media, "to facilitate balanced reporting of developments".

The memo was a round robin

of people supporting the Government's policies, by 24 September.

It was circulated to ministers, private secretaries, rather than to their political advisers, apparently in breach of the 1975 civil service code. Civil servants are not allowed to work on party political matters.

Giles Radice, the Labour chairman of the cross-party Public Service Committee, who drew up the code, said: "I am pleased to see Sir Robin is defending the conventions enshrined in the code, but it is disturbing to see that government ministers seem to be trying to flout it." He said he would ask the committee to summon Mr Heseltine to give evidence.

The Deputy Prime Minister told BBC radio: "Robin Butler's note to me made it clear his view, with which I totally agreed, that departments in carrying out this responsibility should use their political special

advisers." Asked why the memo had passed between civil servants, he said: "The important thing is to be sure we don't use civil servants for this purpose."

He accused Labour of waging a "dirty tricks" campaign against him, and attacked Baroness Symons, a newly-appointed Labour life peer and former head of the First Division Association of senior civil servants. Sir Robin told her of his ruling in a letter on Friday. "Within hours of Robin Butler having made clear that the position was satisfactory, this particular story was leaked," said Mr Heseltine.

Earlier, Lady Symons told the BBC: "I'm not concerned with the party politics of this at all. I'm concerned with civil service political neutrality being protected." She said particular care to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate uses of civil servants must be taken in the run-up to elections.

Sabbath tipple breaks Welsh drought

Tony Heath

The weather was unusually dry in Wales yesterday but for the first time in more than a century, the whole Principality was wet, because every pub was open for Sunday drinking.

Last Wednesday's referendum lifted the ban in Dwyfor, the last bastion of the shuttered Sabbath, by a majority of at least 2-1.

Customers queued early outside the Coach Inn, at the sea-side village of Clynog Fawr, near Caernarfon. Overnight, landlord Steven Williams decorated it with bunting and unfurled a flag saying: "We Are Open on Sunday". At noon his son and daughter cut a red ribbon. The first drink was on the house, and Mr Williams was delighted: "It's good to have come into the 20th century."

At the Anchorage Inn, at Abersoch, landlady Tracy Jones said: "Sunday opening will make a big difference when the village is packed with holiday-makers in the summer."

Robert Cooke, a regular, agreed: "It's good to have cleared up this business, which



Liquid assets: A Portmeirion pub yesterday, when the Principality's last parched enclave joined the 20th century

Photograph: Dave Kendall

bit more cash into our pockets," he said. Brian Jones, a farmer, who was enjoying a pre-lunch drink declared: "Locals like myself appreciate this - and there's no doubt that tourists will too."

Yesterday marked the end of a long battle by the Seven-Day

Opening Council to bring weekly opening across Wales.

Since 1961, when districts were legally entitled to hold referendums at seven-yearly intervals, the "wet" movement has advanced.

And last week's poll ended

the anomaly which confused visitors and affected the takings in "dry" areas.

David Baird-Murray, a Llanbedr Wells hotelier, who chairs the council, was relieved:

"It's been about the public's freedom of choice. At last com-

moo sense has prevailed." The Reverend Iwan Llewellyn Jones, a leader of the "dry" campaign, was regretful but resigned: "It's bitterly disappointing to see something special like Sunday disappearing for good."

DANGER



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Schools struggle to cover curriculum

Judith Judd
Education Editor

The national curriculum is still too crowded in junior schools despite the Government's efforts to slim it down, says the first official report on the new timetable. Most teachers believe the new slimmer-down curriculum for 5- to 14-year-olds is an improvement on the old one but that in some subjects they are struggling to cover all the material required.

Teachers of 7- to 11-year-olds, the age group whom inspectors say are the worst taught, have the biggest problems.

Far from neglecting the basics, these teachers, the evidence shows, are spending so much time on English, maths and science that they may be squeezing out other subjects.

Two years ago, ministers asked Sir Ron Dearing, head of the School Curriculum and As-

sessment Authority, which advises the Government on the curriculum, to cut back the curriculum after teachers complained that it was overloaded.

The decision to review all subjects came six years after the national curriculum was introduced and after there had already been a series of changes which left most teachers bewildered. Gillian Shepherd, the Secretary of State for Education, has promised there will be no more changes until the year 2000.

The report from the authority, designed to show whether revision will be needed, says that schools find the new curriculum

much more manageable and straightforward than the old.

But the report, based on school visits and interviews with teachers and experts, suggests some worries remain. In English, teachers have difficulty covering the material required for reading. In maths, some pri-

mary teachers say they cannot squeeze everything into the time available. Sir Ron aims to free up time to allow schools to offer subjects not included in the prescribed curriculum but that has not happened.

The authority says: "Many schools have used the freed-up time... to concentrate on the national curriculum subjects rather than to extend the curriculum into areas such as modern foreign languages or environmental studies."

The report also says lack of funds is preventing teachers from meeting all curriculum requirements. Few schools are teaching Information Technology properly, because they do not have enough computers, or lack suitably trained teachers.

The report says it is too early to say whether the curriculum is raising standards but it has led some teachers to change their methods.

BBC to correct pledges paper

Matthew Horsman
Media Editor

The BBC conceded yesterday that its "Statement of Promises to Viewers and Listeners" needed to be corrected to remove suggestions that its main broadcasting rivals did not offer a full range of programme genres in peak time.

The misrepresentation in the statement, which outlined the BBC's 230 promises to licence-payers, last week infuriated Channel 4 and ITV, which both called on the BBC to act swiftly to remedy the mistake.

In a letter to *The Independent*, published today, the BBC said: "We should have stated the criteria [for inclusion of programming] and how the calculations were arrived at. We will correct this in further print runs of the promises."

Michael Grade, chief executive of Channel 4, said he would order a review of the schedule to see whether the channel did meet the criteria. "But in any event, the BBC now admits it made a mistake," he added. "I think that every copy already printed should be withdrawn."

The list of programme genres on page 7 of the 50-page document suggested that Channel 4 broadcast no natural history, contemporary music or no-serial comedy in peak time. It also implied that ITV did not have factual programmes during peak hours.

The BBC explained yesterday that the list was based on strict criteria: "A broadcaster must transmit UK-made programmes in each category for more than half an hour in an average week at peak time, between 6pm and 10.30pm."

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Letters, page 11

Diplomats to join trade spotting business

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Trade spotting, the promotion of exports and inward investment, is to be made a central function of the Diplomatic Service at all British missions overseas, a Government White Paper will announce today.

The Prime Minister noted there is not much of the gear and high commissions has been agreed by Ian Laing, President of the Board of Trade, and the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, who will make a Commons statement on the White Paper.

The change of gear for the embassies and high commissions will be seen as identifying new and that distilling from it a convincing action plan may not be easy.

"Delivering the message in an imaginative and headline-catching

way will therefore be particularly important."

The key message of the White Paper is that diplomacy can be improved by trade and that exports can be helped not only by inward, foreign investment in Britain, but also by British investment overseas.

A Government source said yesterday that the White Paper marked a stronger commitment to the promotion of trade "from the heart of the Foreign Office".

Trade promotion was no longer being seen as something beneath ambassadors and all big missions already have strong

commercial teams. "But it is now going to be a central and not an ancillary function," the source said.

The White Paper will mark a change in the relationship between the Foreign Office and the Department of Trade and Industry, with the creation of a joint export promotion directorate which will have the job of making sure that the new policy penetrates all parts of the Diplomatic Service.

A Government source said yesterday that the White Paper marked a stronger commitment to the promotion of trade "from the heart of the Foreign Office".

"There is already a greater export consciousness within the Foreign Office but it does need a push," the source said.

Nevertheless, as the DTI's White Paper on competition was issued in June, 85,000 British and local company visits were handled by overseas posts last year, and the same posts also provided 6,000 specific information services for British businesses.

The Government provides a range of services delivered through a worldwide network of over 200 commercial posts overseas, the White Paper said.

The new laws were backed up by a DTI staff in London which included more than 100 export promoters recruited from the private sector.

Sex and...
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JPM 11/11/96

news

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Charity calls for end to rape victims' ordeal

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

Rape victims suffer harassment by defendants and their friends or families, threats to their children, damage to property and can feel compelled to move home to escape persecution, the charity Victim Support says in research published today.

The study, based on a survey of 92 Victim Support schemes and 17 court-based Witness Services which helped 1,500 rape victims in 1995, shows that despite years of cam-

paigning for a better deal for rape victims, they are still hampered in obtaining information about the progress of their case and face what they view as unacceptable ordeals under cross-examination in the courtroom.

A third of the schemes taking part in the survey said they had helped victims who had been re-assaulted or harassed since the original attack.

Of these, 33 per cent reported contact with victims who had been intimidated by the friends or family of the defendant, in-

cluding harassment and assault; 27 per cent had helped victims harassed by the defendant himself; and 23 per cent had contact with victims forced to move home. Thirteen per cent knew of women who had received threats to their children and 7 per cent reported victims whose property had been damaged. One woman was later murdered by the man who raped her.

Many women did not receive even the most basic information about their case, with only 51 per cent of schemes reporting that they were always or usually informed whether their alleged attacker had been released on bail. This is despite the announcement by Barbara Mills, the Director of Public Prosecutions, in February last year that victims would always be consulted about bail decisions.

The survey paints a bleak picture of the stress still faced by victims over delay, or when court dates are abruptly changed – often just before trial. Dismay over lack of contact with prosecuting counsel is also a recurring theme of the report.

More than 40 per cent of the schemes said women continued to be disturbed by cross-examination by defence counsel, with some victims saying it amounted to character assassination or that the trial was even worse than the rape.

Setting out a series of recommendations, Helen Reeves, the charity's director, said: "This survey confirms the difficulties which women face in trying to obtain justice. Many are too frightened to seek help from the police in case they risk further harassment from the defendant."

"In court, many women report feeling humiliated and intimidated during cross-examination. But even then, convictions are rare. Women need more protection at every stage of the investigation and trial, before confidence in the justice system can be restored."

The report follows the call by Ray White, the new president of the Association of Chief Police Officers, for curbs on intimidations of witnesses and aggressive cross-examination by barristers. In a recent stalking case, defence counsel accused a woman of behaving like a "queer bee that dresses to kill".

Mary, one of the 11 victims who gave Victim Support their personal testimonies, was presented with a request to agree to a last-minute guilty plea when her case got to court – but only to a lesser charge of indecent assault, writes Patricia Wynn Davies.

She felt the Criminal Prosecution Service had assured her that he would still receive a custodial sentence, but he got a fine, "an utter insult", she said. She was also subjected to the man's plea in mitigation, which was reported in the local press as if it was evidence, and included defence counsel's statement that she had been "round the block". She said: "I feel like I was sold out by the system itself. I feel really let down."

For Paula, the victim of a gang attack, the trauma came during the police investigation when instead of looking through one-way glass at the identification parade, she had to confront each defendant face to face. "One of them spoke to me and said he was sorry - that upset me even more," she said.

She was assaulted after the court case by a girlfriend of one of the defendants. A fortnight later a family member of one of the defendants found her address and harassed her. She was not offered protection. Although she was only 15 at the time of the trial she was told she

was too old to give evidence from behind a screen.

Jenny still has mixed feelings about reporting her rape. She described the medical examination as "horrendous" and learned that the defendant had got bail through reading it the paper. She got mixed up when giving her evidence. The man had a gun but was described as "the perfect gentleman" by his character witnesses. He was acquitted.

Ruth was another victim faced with down-grading of charges at the 11th hour, despite the police surgeon's opinion that it was one of the most brutal assaults he had seen.

The policeman walked up and said: "Is it yes?" I felt that I had no option, " she said. "I feel that victims are just not represented in court. The control that is taken away from you when you are raped is repeated."

Sarah, who is registered blind, moved house after a dustbin was thrown through her living room window after someone she knew was convicted of raping her. Before the trial, the prosecution barrister warned her that the defence might imply that she was pursuing the case in order to make a claim for criminal injuries compensation.

Like the other interviewees, she said she could not have coped without Victim Support.

Cycle scheme rivals on path to conflict



Twin-track proposal: The new Bristol-Bath track may soon have competition. Photograph: Christopher Jones

Carlton Reid and Christian Wolmar

First there was canal fever, then railway fever and now there's cycle path fever.

With Sustrans, the cycle network charity, well into building its 6,500 mile network across the country, a rival private project for another network is to be launched later this month with support from transport ministers.

And just like those previous crazes, the cycle path mania is set to cause bitter rivalry. National Byway will be a 3,000-mile cycle trail on existing minor roads and is the brainchild of Alan Rushton, the race organiser who brought the Tour de France to Britain two years ago.

Rushton and his company, Sport for Television Ltd, have been negotiating sponsorship deals for the route for the past 18 months and the project will be launched on 20 November at a press conference attended by John Bowes, the junior transport minister.

As well as commercial sponsorship, Rushton has also secured map and guidebook provision by AA Publications. Much to the delight of transport ministers, the initiative involves no government funding. Sustrans was awarded £42.5m from the Millennium Fund last year.

While National Byway will be a non-profit-making organisation, it will pay a fee to Mr Rushton. National Byway has support from the Department of Transport, the Rural Development Commission, the Countryside Commission, and the British Tourist Authority. Private sponsors include Canon, Chrysler, Raleigh and Hovis, the biggest, which will contribute at least £200,000.

Sustrans was not told of the project until September and were surprised not to have been informed earlier. Indeed, cycling groups are concerned that the new project is misleading because cyclists will find few facilities on the routes. The new network which starts and ends in Winchester and links 1,000 "secondary heritage sites" – Sustrans already connects most main sites – throughout the UK is little more than a signposting project as the roads, unlike those used by Sustrans, will not be traffic-calmed. One cycling source said: "This is not a proper cycle network. Cars will be able to go fast and this poses a danger. If Mr Rushton were really interested in improving the lot of cyclists, he would have worked with Sustrans, not as a rival."

Alan Kind, chief executive of the Byways and Bridleways Trust said: "It's like waiting for a bus. No cycle provisions for years and then two rival routes come along at once."

Mr Kind is sceptical about the project. He says: "The Byway proposal needs careful thought. Ministers must love it as it is a national scheme costing no money, but what will happen when the Byway crosses busy A roads?" He suggests that alterations will have to be made to the road network, in line with those on the Sustrans network, and that will eventually require government spending.

The difference in approach by Sustrans and National Byway can perhaps best be illustrated by the fact that National Byway will be using donated Chrysler Jeeps to carry out surveys while Sustrans continue to use its collection of folding bikes.

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DPA

news

European ruling: Government hoping for concessions as EU court set to give employees minimum rights to time off and holidays

Working hours ruling to launch wave of claims

Banbie Clement
and Anthony Bevins

The Government is set to face a wave of legal action on behalf of millions of workers over the working time directive.

Ministers will act quickly to implement the law on the 48-hour week if, as expected, the European Court upholds the validity of the directive tomorrow. But they cannot possibly meet the 23 November legal deadline for enactment of the directive, set three years after a European Union Employment Council pushed through the provision.

The Government challenged the directive in the European Court, arguing that it should not have been dressed up as a health and safety measure.

John Major says it was agreed at Maastricht that social policy should not be smuggled into law under health and safety provisions and he is demanding a further treaty change to rectify the expected judgment. But in spite of weekend reports that Jacques Chirac, the French President, was sympathetic to Mr Major's complaint, the British are not expected to have many allies.

However, the news tomorrow may not be all bad for Britain. There were signs that the defeat could be softened by concessions. The European Commission appeared yesterday to be anticipating demands from the court for the directive to be trimmed back.

The TUC pointed out yesterday that the working time directive's provisions on holidays would have the most direct and widespread impact in the British labour market.

One in eight British workers – most of them part-timers, said – could benefit from new rights to paid annual leave. There were no exceptions to such provisions unlike the clauses dealing with a 48-hour week.

Official figures showed that almost 2.5 million employees enjoyed no paid holidays, 4.1 million less than three weeks and 5.9 million less than four weeks. The directive introduces a three-week legal minimum, increasing to four weeks after three years.

Millions of others will receive new rights to a 48-hour week. Among the exceptions, however, are executives, transport employees, sea fishermen and doctors in training. For those industries affected by the law there are provisions for flexible application through collective bargaining and scope for employers to persuade their workers to agree to work for longer.

Trade unions are to launch court proceedings on behalf of public sector workers and employees in the privatised utilities. Such workers stand the best chance of successful court action under the directive.

Rodney Bickerstaffe, general secretary of Unison, the country's largest union, said yesterday that it would take action on behalf of individuals "disadvantaged" by Britain's failure to implement the directive on time. Unison is targeting night workers, people who work shifts, part-time workers and those with no entitlement to annual leave.

Roger Lyons, leader of white collar and technical union MSF, said that his organisation would seek to negotiate changes.

John Monks, TUC general secretary, said the Government's appeal against the directive was based on "a narrow-minded resistance to all things European."



Time for change: Women clocking on in Manchester in the 1950s. Under EU rules they could insist on a maximum 48-hour week

Why British stand is just political charade

Opposition to minimal rights doomed from the start

Sarah Helm

Brussels

could do to stop the measure because it had no veto.

The Commission proposed the directive under a health and safety provision of the treaty – article 118a – which is governed by qualified majority voting. As so often happens, therefore, Britain set out to try and claw back powers which it had already signed away.

He boasted that the teeth of the directive had been drawn. More than three years later, Britain is struggling to extract the same troublesome molar.

The long battle over directive 93/104/EC, setting rules for a maximum 48-hour working week, as well as paid holiday and breaks, is another example of a doomed British campaign to prevent European integration.

This campaign has been especially inglorious as the battleground has been a directive which does little more than offer some workers the right to a decent amount of time off.

Furthermore, in its desperation to stand tough in the face of likely defeat tomorrow, the Government has been spreading more and more disinformation about the way the directive was negotiated and its claimed threat to jobs.

The working hours directive was first proposed in 1990 as part of a tranche of provisions. Britain made a political point of opposing it as too costly for employers. The reality was there was nothing the Government

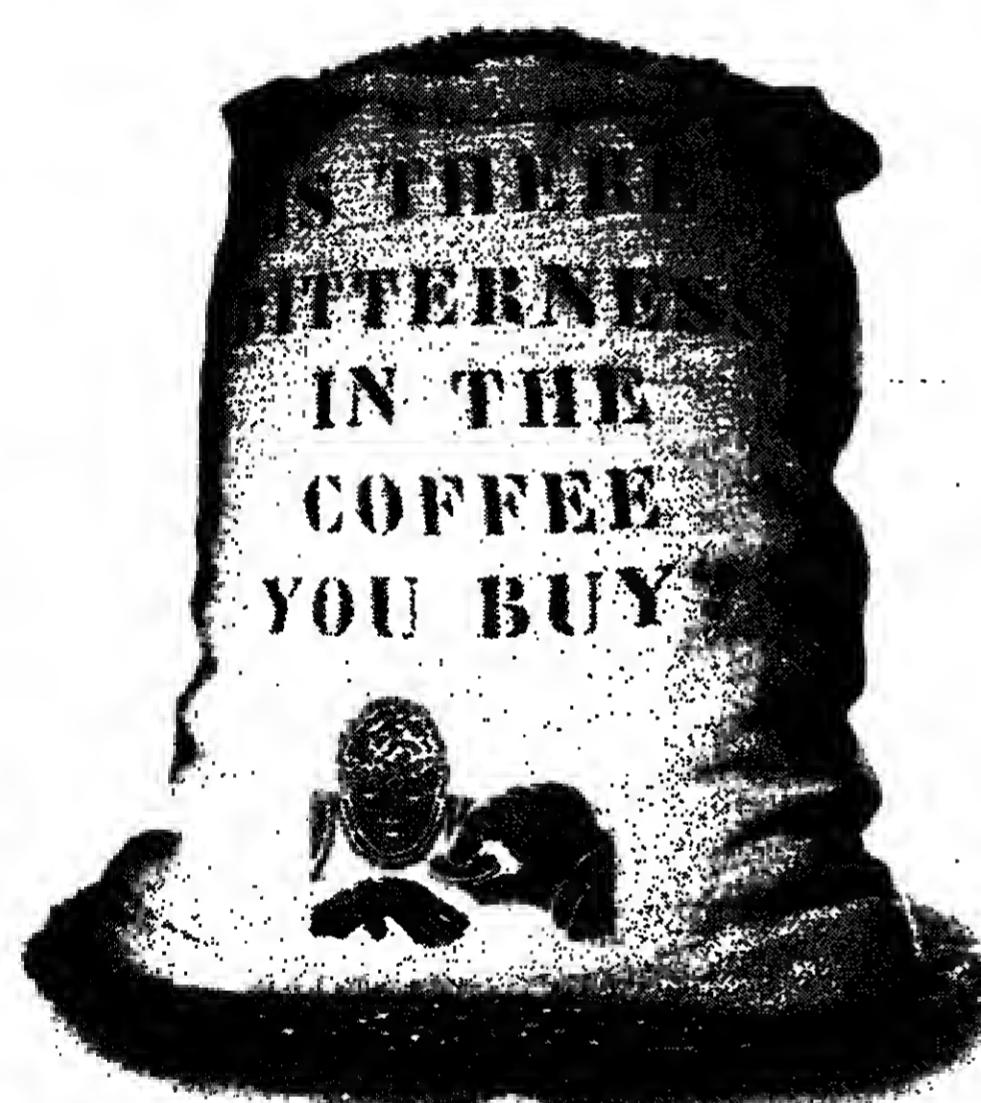
and junior doctors. Furthermore, the 48-hour rule can be "voluntary". If a particular workforce agrees to work more than 48 hours, the directive need not apply. The 48-hour a week rule can also be calculated in some circumstances over a period of up to a year.

As the working hours directive was being finalised in 1992, the Maastricht negotiations were coming to completion and Britain was opting out from the social chapter. The working hours directive had nothing to do with the social chapter, having been proposed two years earlier under the separate health and safety provision.

Yet today, as they demonise Brussels, the Euro-sceptics, encouraged by the Government, outrageously suggest that enacting the working hours directive under article 118a was a ploy to get around Britain's social chapter opt-out.

Mr Major may now wish that he had never launched the legal challenge to the working hours directive, which looks set to produce a European defeat for him in the run-up to the general election.

The court tomorrow may offer Britain a few crumbs, perhaps ruling that some elements of the directive should be further restricted. But it is hard to see that Europe's judges can agree with a government which claims that working hours is not a matter of health and safety.



Minas, Brazil, 1996. A coffee plantation worker toils in 80 degree heat to earn 56p an hour. It's not enough but it's better than nothing. Nothing is what he earned last week when bad weather stopped the harvest.

Nothing is what he will earn for the next eight months, when the season is over.

A family is paid a pittance for an 11-hour day.

A child of 6 is taken from school to work in the harvest season.

A man breaks a leg in transit to work, but gets no compensation.

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Firs

Military recruitment show the recruitment of under-18s. On the front line on the front line

David Garrow

John Major

11th hour of the 11th day of the
11th month - the time at which
the First World War ended in
1918 - believes that more people
than for many years observed the two-minute silence at 11am yesterday.

news

First World War heroes who were just boys

Military records show the efforts of under-age volunteers to get on the front line

Clare Garner

As the nation today observes an unprecedented third two-minute silence on Armistice Day itself - as opposed to the Sunday closest to 11 November - military records revealing the horrors and heroism of the First World War are being released by the Public Records Office.

The first batch of enlistment, medical and discharge records of the 1914-18 war come into the public domain in a year when an unprecedented three national silences have been observed to remember those who died for their country - the first, at the Royal Legion's Festival of Remembrance on Saturday night, the second, the traditional ceremony at Whitehall yesterday, and the third, today's.

The released service documents reveal evidence of the lengths to which under-age volunteers went in order to get past army recruiters and onto the front line. One such case was 15-year-old Pte George Alfred Redrup. He was so desperate to defend his country that he led a double life. Pte Redrup, of Prestwood, Buckinghamshire, managed to join two regiments at the heart of the fighting and earn himself the 1914-15 Star and the Victory Medal, before dying at the age of 19.

"Until now, the medal roll has shown Pte Redrup as two separate soldiers with the same name," said Simon Fowler, the exhibition officer at the Public Records Office at Kew, west London. "The army does not seem to have realised that the two entries refer to the same man."

Only 40 per cent of the nation's service documents have survived. Many were destroyed in 1940, when the London



Proud tribute: Ian Whitelaw, of Newcastle upon Tyne, with the HMS Euralus Association at yesterday's ceremony in Whitehall, London

Photograph: Mykel Nicolaou

building in which they were stored was bombed. Three-quarters of those which survived are fire-damaged and therefore not being released at present.

Some historians have hailed today's release of documents as

an "enormously significant" event. The 750,000 or so files could, they say, change people's understanding of the war. But Dr Francisco Romero-Salvado, a lecturer in modern European history at London Guild-

hall University, whose thesis is on the First World War, doubts the documents will add much to scholarship unless they reveal that under-age volunteers were desperate to join the war in 1917-18.

"We know there was this great heroism, patriotism and movement of masses trying to get conscripted in 1914," said Dr Romero-Salvado. "It would, however, be shocking if the documents provided evidence

that these people below-age to sign up still wanted to go and fight in the later stages of the war."

"By 1917 it was not patriotic at all. It was almost a miracle that they managed to finish

the war." It would also, he added, be shocking to find evidence of volunteers younger than 15.

The British Legion, which has led a campaign for a revival of the Armistice Day silence on the

11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month - the time at which the First World War ended in 1918 - believes that more people than for many years observed the two-minute silence at 11am yesterday.

Since the Second World War, the Sunday nearest November 11 - rather than the date itself - has been the day when the Royal Family and political leaders have led the nation in silent tribute to those who gave their lives for their country.

David France, director of the Legion's Armistice Day silence campaign, said: "When we started the campaign last year many firms said they found not too late and did not realise the extent of support. This time supermarkets and other leading firms have been telling us that they intend to announce the silence on their premises on both Sunday and Monday."

The Queen Mother, who is

96, was said to be "very dis-

The 750,000 or so files could change people's understanding of the war

pointed" that a chill kept her away from the Remembrance Service at the Cenotaph in Whitehall yesterday.

Meanwhile, two members of the last Labour government have launched a campaign to make Second World War poetry part of the National Curriculum.

Lord Healey and Lord Merlyn Rees believe the standard of *The Voice of War*, a collection of the best poems from the Second World War published this week, is so good it ought to be studied in schools.

"This is the authentic voice of war," said Lord Healey. "This was a grass roots war and the poems are a poignant reflection of what happened. It would be marvellous if today's students were given the chance of studying them."

How Herbie's Nazi past was unearthed

Ian Burrell

Herbie has been exposed as a Nazi: The Volkswagen Beetle, animated in children's films and adored by Sixties hippies and the rave generation alike, was created at the behest of Adolf Hitler.

Volkswagen staffed its production lines with Jewish inmates of Auschwitz concentration camp and Russian prisoners of war.

The company contributed bombs and vehicles for the Nazi war effort and made parts for the V1 buzzbombs that blitzed Britain.

The unpalatable past of one of the world's most loved cars has been uncovered in a 10-year trawl through German archives by two of the country's leading historians.

Last week, to the embarrassment of many Volkswagen executives, the results were published. They could barely have come at a worse time.

In 1998, VW is planning to re-launch the Beetle. The company is also involved in massive investment in Israel, where it is setting up a \$600m manganese plant. And David Herman,

head of its major rival Opel, is Jewish.

Yet it was Volkswagen's own idea to commission the research. The authors, Hans Mommsen and Manfred Grieger, were paid by the company to write an independent history of VW during Nazi times.

The project forms part of a trend among Germany's oldest and biggest companies to bare their souls in an attempt to exorcise the demons of their past.

Jewish pressure groups, including the Holocaust Educational Trust, have been demanding that the companies make an admission of their complicity with the Nazi regime.

The trust is particularly angry that Dresdner Bank, which owns Kleinwort Benson, the British investment bank, has not done enough to apologise for its close relationship with the SS and the Nazi party.

By contrast, Deutsche Bank hired five independent historians to write a corporate history of the bank, which detailed its part in Aryanisation and the dispossession of Jewish property, for which it said the bank bore a moral guilt.



People's car: Adolf Hitler at the inauguration ceremony of the Fallersleben Volkswagen factory in 1938. Photograph: AP

Daimler-Benz, commissioned a similar history and has voluntarily paid out more than £50m in compensation to former slave

workers. The Third Reich used around 10 million people for slave labour, working for such

companies as Siemens, Krupp and AEG.

The German courts have now given the slave labourers, mainly from eastern Europe, the right to sue companies like VW for their suffering.

The story of Volkswagen and the Nazis, entitled *Volkswagen and its Workers in the Third Reich*, could form the basis for their actions.

It details how Hitler commissioned the Beetle from car designer Dr Ferdinand Porsche and then ordered the building of *Kraft durch Freude Stadt* - Strength through Joy Town - to house the production workers.

When war started, the production lines switched to making *kubelwagen* personnel carriers and *schwimmwagen* amphibious vehicles.

Jonathan Mantle, author of *Car Wars*, which analysed twentieth century politics through the eyes of the car companies, said that all car manufacturers had accepted that in times of war they had to strike a deal with the government of the country in which they were operating. "All successful car companies in the first part of the twentieth century have always been synonymous with the military destinies and ambitions of their host country."

He said that General Motors, through its German subsidiary, had contributed to the Nazi war effort and that BMW had become a greater user of slave labour than Volkswagen.

"Daimler-Benz were much closer to the Nazi Party and Adolf Hitler than Volkswagen were. The Daimler-Benz badge used to hang next to the swastika at rallies."

Mr Mantle said evidence suggested that disclosures about a car company's shady history were likely to have no influence on potential buyers.

His theory is borne out by

Britain's own reluctance to take over Volkswagen when the Beetle plant was offered to the Allies as part of a package of war reparations; moral decisions overcame into it.

"It's the most God-awful design I ever saw," said Lord Nutfield, of the British Motor Corporation.

His colleague Lord Rootes added: "It is quite unattractive to the average buyer. It is too ugly and too cosy."

And once, a windless August, when the sun released its weight and all the crops were burned, he kept watch on the poured stone bridge, beneath those glasses, thick as lead-barred windows.

Beneath those glasses, thick as lead-barred windows, his eyes ran through his head, the double barrels of an old gun, sick on its load, the trigger held in place by one thin metal bow.

Going toward the Catholic church, whose twin white ducie caps speared the clouds for offering, we had to pass him on the poured stone bridge, for nickels we could act as though we'd not been offered stories. How these all turned out we knew, each one, just had the river eat within its course the line of reasoning.

He went, each morning, to the first confession. The sulking curtains bit their lips behind him. Still those in closer pews could hear the sweet and limerick sins he'd made up on the spot. I saw a few consider, and take note — procedural. They'd try them out at home.

And once, a windless August, when the sun released its weight and all the crops were burned, he kept watch on the poured stone bridge, beneath those glasses, thick as lead-barred windows. His eyes ran through his head, the double barrels of an old gun, sick on its load, the trigger held in place by one thin metal bow.

Louise Erdrich grew up in North Dakota and is of German-American and Chippewa descent. Novelist and poet, published both sides of the Atlantic, her *Tales of Burning Love* were published this year in the UK. Flamingo released *Jacklight*, her second poetry collection, from which this poem is taken, last week.

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Italy's middle classes unite against taxes

Andrew Gumbel
Rome

Any illusions that Italy would find it easy to sell the pain of European integration to its own electorate were definitely shattered this weekend, as more than half a million of the country's conservative middle classes descended on Rome to vent their displeasure at tax increases in the forthcoming budget.

Heeding the call of the opposition led by Silvio Berlusconi, the former prime minister, and Gianfranco Fini of the reformed neo-fascist National Alliance, armies of shopkeepers, small businessmen and low-ranking

professionals converged on the capital from every corner of the country on Saturday afternoon, turning the streets of central Rome into a huge seething tide of people and bright anti-government banners.

"No government can work against us," Mr Berlusconi proclaimed to loud cheers in the closing rally. "We are the Italy that goes to work and produces, the industrious, patient and responsible Italy that can decide, if pushed, that it's not going to take it any more."

With parliament due to vote this Thursday on the 1997 budget, an unprecedented austerity package aimed at squeezing Italy into the single European currency from the word go, the crowd gave a noisy thumbs-down to an array of proposed tax increases including the "Euro-tax", a one-off levy for next year totalling some 12.5 trillion lire (£5bn). Romano Prodi, the Prime Minister, was depicted in banners as Pinocchio, and his government accused of misleading and mismanaging the country.

It was an extraordinary gathering, made up of the kind of people who normally sit at home and turn their noses up at the kind of people who go out on demonstrations.

Beneath the impeccably proper surface, however, was a wellspring of

Poujadist resentment and latent violence. The demonstrators screamed swear words and sexual insults at government ministers and cried for them to be shipped off to Rwanda or the Congo; one small group of unreconstructed Fascists vowed revenge for their brothers "murdered by the servants of the state".

Mr Berlusconi himself rallied at the "fiscal dictatorship" of the government and happily encouraged slogans depicting him as a victim of the political and judicial establishment. His attitude made clear that the core purpose of the demonstration was purely political: a show of strength by an opposition that had up to now

shown little taste or talent for taunting Mr Prodi's six-month-old administration, and support for Mr Berlusconi, as his political career is ever more compromised by corruption and business malpractice charges.

The overwhelming success of the demonstration significantly broadened the issue, however. It proved that the country is still irreconcilably split down the middle between the Berlusconi-Fini brand of right-wing populism and the cautious, intellectual pragmatism of Mr Prodi and his struggling Olive Tree coalition. That sense of division, in turn, is a worrying portent of the kind of unrest

Italy could see once the 1997 budget really begins to bite.

The great unmentionable subject of Saturday's rally was Europe, but Europe and the price of entry into monetary union was ultimately what it was all about. The subject went unmentioned because the vast majority of Italians, especially the merchant middle class, still believes in Europe; even Mr Berlusconi could not afford to disapprove of the austerity budget in itself, so he chose to complain about the preference for tax increases over spending cuts instead.

Sooner or later, though, open hostility to Europe seems likely to surface and with it all the thorniest

issues in Italian politics, particularly the tension between the affluent north and the under-developed south. As the eminent commentator Eugenio Scalfari pointed out yesterday, the 1997 budget is just the beginning and another dose of austerity, probably in the form of cuts in pensions, will come along next year.

The middle classes will have to choose whether they want to put off our entry into the European Union or else agree to pay the price or it," he wrote, adding that logic must lead them to the latter conclusion. To judge by the mood in Rome on Saturday, logic may not be the prime consideration out on the streets.

Sexual abuse scandal hits US Army

Rupert Cornwell
Washington

Five years ago, the Tailhook scandal struck a blow at the US Navy's image from which that service has yet entirely to recover. Now it is the turn of the Army, rocked by a growing scandal of institutionalised sexual abuse and misbehaviour at one of its largest training facilities which is raising basic questions about the place of women in the armed forces.

A stream of revelations over the past four days has sent the US news media flocking to the giant Aberdeen Proving Ground north of Baltimore, in Maryland, where some 11,000 young military personnel, up to 20 per cent of them women, come every year to be instructed in the maintenance and repair of weapons, tanks and other heavy equipment.

If evidence released by the

may have contributed to the suicide last May of Admiral Jeremy Boorda, the Navy's chief of operations and senior uniformed officer.

Well aware of the damage caused by the Navy high command's initially weak response to Tailhook, the Army this time has acted swiftly and vigorously: apart from the three instructors charged, 20 other soldiers, both officers and of non-commissioned ranks, have been suspended as of yesterday, while almost 1,500 calls have been logged on a toll-free "hot line" set up to register complaints arising from what Major General Robert Shadley, commander of the Aberdeen facility, has called "the worst thing I have ever seen in the army".

And in many ways the allegedly systematic sexual harassment and licence at Aberdeen, if confirmed, would be more serious than Tailhook. For one thing, if the charges thus far are to be believed, the practice was underpinned by intimidation. Second, unlike Tailhook, the incidents took place on base and in uniform, and indeed seem to have grown out of routine life at the base.

Now the scandal he as straightforward as it at first appeared. Responding to the allegations, the three men charged say they have been falsely accused. They do not deny having had sexual relations – illegal between officers and trainees – but insist these were consensual.

As a result, questions are now being asked about the basic wisdom of mixing the sexes in the military. Rigorous separation between them in the barracks at Aberdeen has failed in prevent affairs; such is now the level of suspicion there that women cadets have been ordered not to move around the base without a "buddy", or chaperon, while no drill commander dare be left alone with a female trainee.

But the army insists that desegregation will continue, whatever the current future: "Sure, we could solve this by not having male instructors," the Army Secretary, Togo West, said this weekend. "But that answer disregards the nature of our society... there is no segregation ultimately in the defence of our country."

Army is to be believed, however, an equally important skill for the female trainees has been to dodge the attentions of drill instructors taking advantage of their status to demand, and on occasion obtain by force, sexual favours from their charges. So far three drill instructors, including one company commander, have been formally accused of offences ranging from rape and forcible sodomy to adultery, which in the US military is a crime. According to the charges one of them threatened his victim with the words, "If anyone finds out about this, I'll kill you."

Inevitably, the episode has drawn comparisons with the Tailhook scandal, when the 1991 annual convention of Navy aviators at the Hilton Hotel in Las Vegas degenerated into a veritable Bacchanalia of sexual harassment and abuse that led to Congressional hearings and

ultimately to the resignation of

Admiral Boorda. The episode has drawn comparisons with the Tailhook scandal, when the 1991 annual convention of Navy aviators at the Hilton Hotel in Las Vegas degenerated into a veritable Bacchanalia of sexual harassment and abuse that led to Congressional hearings and

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Photograph: AP

Israel fails to soothe West Bank

Patrick Cockburn
Deir Qadis, West Bank

Specks of blood on the stones of the dirt road mark the flight of the villagers of Deir Qadis after Israeli soldiers shot dead one and wounded 12 when they demonstrated against the confiscation of their land to build a Jewish settlement.

It was the worst violence on the West Bank since 60 Palestinians and 13 Israelis were killed in September after Israel opened a tunnel in the Muslim quarter of Jerusalem. Amid fluttering Palestinian flags, police carried the body of Atallah Amireh, 36, a father of nine, to his grave in the nearby village of Nifl.

Earlier in the day, some 200 people from four Palestinian vil-

ages north-west of Jerusalem and close to the border between the West Bank and Israel had marched to a hill where Israeli bulldozers were clearing land to expand a settlement of ultra-orthodox Jews at Kiryat Sefer. "We are losing the equivalent of 1,250 acres," says Qais Nahash, a local schoolteacher. "We won't have any land left to build on."

When the villagers reached the place where the bulldozers were at work, soldiers told them to go home because they had no permit for their demonstration. Mohammed Abu Sahr, who was one of the marchers, said that "many of demonstrators were quite old, in their forties or fifties."

A confrontation started when an elderly man was pushed

over and young Palestinians started jostling the soldiers.

The soldiers first fired in the air and then at the legs of villagers from close range. They responded by throwing stones, and the soldiers began to fire at chest height. Mr Amireh was shot as he turned to leave. As with the violence on 5 September, the Israeli army responded to stone-throwing with live rounds aimed to kill.

The incident shows that the easing yesterday of the Israeli closure of the West Bank and Gaza, preventing workers reaching employment in Israel, is unlikely to reduce tensions. The speed with which Israel is pushing ahead with building what is in effect a new settlement near Kiryat Sefer is also

likely to undermine any re-

maining Palestinian confidence in the Oslo accords.

Work on expanding Kiryat Sefer, home to ultra-orthodox Jews housed in pink-coloured six- or seven-storey blocks, started a week ago and the local children have been throwing stones at the soldiers, says Mr Nahash. Despite the shooting earlier in the day, five yellow bulldozers were working yesterday evening at levelling terraces and pushing over olive trees. Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, has promised to increase numbers of the 14,000 settlers in the West Bank and Gaza.

Meanwhile, in one of the few signs of reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians in recent months, the descendants of Jews who used to live in Hebron before the massacre of 1929, in which 67 of them were killed by Palestinians, returned yesterday to re-dedicate themselves from the present-day Israeli settlers.

"The settlers today don't represent the old community of

Hebron," says Moshe Galmor on meeting the Palestinian mayor, Mustafa Natshe. He added: "We have no connection with them."

The 48 families of Israeli settlers in central Hebron, who believe that the West Bank and Gaza were given by God to the Jews and that the 2.5 million Palestinian residents are there on sufferance, often portray themselves as the successors to the pre-1929 Jewish community in Hebron. The present-day settlers are defended by 1,000 Israeli troops.

Standards are unlucky if they get caught in the crossfire of turf battles, which generally concern only Russian businessmen.

But police are still bunting the killer of Paul Tatam, an American who became embroiled in a dispute with his Russian partners in hotel venture here.

He was shot in an underpass last Sunday in a murder which has shocked the foreign community and which may, for a while at least, make other Western businessmen think twice about investing in Russia.

The US itself offered no sign of humility. "The lack of American participation on the ACABQ will inevitably diminish the significance of that body in UN budget deliberations," an official offered. And for good measure, he went on: "The outcome of the ACABQ elections adds even more to the importance of electing this year a new, highly-qualified, reform-oriented Secretary General for the UN".

Moscow mafia's cemetery bomb kills 13

Helen Womack
Moscow

At least 13 people were killed here yesterday when a mafia gang blew up their rivals as they gathered to mourn at a cemetery. Victims were hurled through the air by the remote-controlled bomb and their remains strewn over graves.

Security services said 130 people had met at Kotlyakovskoye cemetery for a service for Mikhail Likhodei, the head of an Afghan war veterans' organisation who was killed in a

bomb blast in 1994. "I saw one mutilated body lying on a grave some 30 metres from the centre of the blast," said Artyom Danilevsky, a Reuters correspondent.

Among the dead were

Likhodei's widow, Yelena, who had escaped with injuries in the blast that killed her husband two years ago, and the man who succeeded him at the head of the Afghan War Invalids' Foundation.

The explosion was "probably linked to a settling of old scores", said Colonel Stanislav

Zhorin, of the Federal Security Service, which has taken over from the old KGB and now concentrates on fighting organised crime and terrorism rather than persecuting political dissidents. It was probably no coincidence that the head of another Afghan war veterans' group, which had a dispute with Likhodei's organisation, survived an assassination attempt recently.

Although many invalids from

the war in Afghanistan struggle to survive in the new capitalist Russia by begging from mo-

torists at crossroads, others enjoy a very different lifestyle as their organisations make use of tax breaks given to the handicapped for commercial ventures. Veterans of the Soviet Union's adventure in Afghanistan as well as hardened fighters who have survived Russia's equally disastrous intervention in Chechnya are also in demand as bodyguards to the mafia.

Bombings and shootings are

common in Moscow these days. The press reports only the most spectacular. Innocent by

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Warning shot for ruling élite as Deng associate is sentenced to death

China gets tough in corruption crackdown

Teresa Poole
Peking

A Chinese court has passed a suspended death sentence for corruption on the son of a high-ranking party official, the first time one of the so-called "princelings" has been toppled in the current anti-graft campaign. The sentence strikes at the heart of China's political élite, as both the defendant and his father have close ties to the family of Deng Xiaoping, the country's frail 92-year-old patriarch.

Only sketchy details of the Peking court hearing emerged over the weekend. Zhou Bentang, a high-flying executive in one of China's biggest state corporations, was sentenced to death, suspended for two years.

Last month, court officials confirmed that Mr Zhou had been charged in a "very large" case of taking and offering bribes and concealing illegal property. Suspended death sen-

tences are often commuted to life imprisonment.

Over the past two years, Peking has been rocked by a succession of huge, possibly inter-related, corruption scandals which have resulted in the suicide of a deputy city mayor, the sacking of the city's communist party chief, and the arrest of about 45 top officials, including Mr Zhou.

The amount of money involved is unknown. Last week the official *Outlook* magazine published a figure of about £1.5bn, but other much higher sums have been reported.

Until now, however, no politically sensitive figure has actually been sentenced in court.

The fact that Mr Zhou has received such a heavy sentence sends a clear message to the Deng family and their circle that the old man's patronage can no longer safeguard them, as it did until recently.

Mr Zhou was in charge of the Hoog Kong-listed arms of

Shougang Capital Iron and Steel works, one of the most important industrial conglomerates in China. Crucially, he was a close associate of Mr Deng's youngest son, Deng Zhifang, who was boss of one of Shougang's Hong Kong companies.

Mr Zhou's career bore all the hallmarks of having a helping hand from his father, Zhou Guanwu. The elder Zhou, aged 76, was formerly the chairman and party secretary of the Shougang empire, and a very close friend of Deng Xiaoping.

Targeting such a well-connected individual would not be possible without the go-ahead from President Jiang Zemin, who rose to power because of the elder Deng's backing. The sentence suggests Mr Jiang is very confident of his stature at the moment, and that he wants to warn the Deng children to stay out of any political manoeuvrings after their ailing father dies.

The ousting of Mr Chen was very popular among ordinary Pekingers, but cynicism has since set in because he has not been punished. To date, the corruption crackdown has focused only on middle and lower level cadres, with many death sentences and heavy jail terms.

The state-controlled media at the weekend made no mention of the suspended death sentence, but did report a big restructuring of the Shougang group.

Social satirist whose art lies in discretion

Local Hero
Ding Cong



Avoiding the question: "Excuse me, what does your boyfriend do for a living?"
His uncle is a rich overseas Chinese'

"Whether I work or not, I still get the bonus."

Old China was not kind to Mr Ding. Born in Shanghai in 1916, he wanted to follow in the footsteps of his cartoonist father, but had to flee the city when the Japanese invaded in 1937. After the Communist victory in 1949, he edited a magazine until 1957 when, like many artists, he was branded a Rightist and banished to the frozen Northeast for three years. Back in Peking, he then fell victim to the Cultural Revolution. "For more than 20 years, I had no right to publish cartoons," he says.

"Rehabilitation" came in 1979, with the start of the reform era. "I decided to devote all my remaining years to drawing cartoons, because in the past I had always been craving to draw cartoons, but always bad no chance," he says.

But a cartoonist specialising in social criticism must still be very careful. "As a citizen of the People's Republic of China, if you draw a lot of phenomena which expose the ugly side of society, people will criticise you."

The apprentice smiles:

...the huge gap between the rich and the poor ... Right now, in every aspect of life, there are a lot of unreasonable things."

Nor do the remnants of the old China escape his pen. In one cartoon, a lazy apprentice is lounging under a tree counting his money. The team leader, sweating from digging, comes up and asks: "You've just got your bonus, how can you be sitting here like a bump on a log?" The apprentice smiles:

...Whether I work or not, I still get the bonus."

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There are still some topics that cannot be touched upon. For instance, no cartoonist would dare to portray the corruption scandal which resulted last year in the sacking of Peking's party chief and the suicide of a deputy mayor. In recent months, party control of the media has even intensified as part of the official campaign for "spiritual civilisation".

These days, Mr Ding is sounding slightly disillusioned. "I have drawn so many pictures about the unreasonable things, but although I keep drawing, they never change. I am very disappointed, feeling my function is really very limited."

Teresa Poole

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Algeria opens a symbolic link to Europe

Elizabeth Nash
Madrid

The first gas pipeline between North Africa and Europe – financed largely by the European Union – opened this week, bringing gas from Algeria to Spain and eventually to France and Portugal. A symbolic link between Africa and Europe, it will help to diversify the supply of gas throughout Europe and bring down transport costs.

"It was a dream becoming true. Few people believed in this project 25 months ago," the Algerian Energy Minister Amar Makhloufi told foreign guests and reporters shortly after the went officially on stream on Saturday.

The 1,400km pipeline brings gas from Morocco's Hassi R'Mel deposits via Morocco and the Gibraltar Strait to the southern Spanish city of Cordoba, where it will be channelled into Spain's existing natural gas network. By 2000, the pipe will supply nearly half Spain's gas needs.

The pipeline has been nearly five years in the making, at the cost of \$2.3bn – nearly half of which was contributed by the European Union. Supplies are to build up gradually and will replace existing supplies brought by boat from Algeria – which supplies 50 per cent of Spain's gas – Libya, Norway and Aus-

tralia. It is the world's most complicated such project, since 45km of pipe had to be laid on the geologically complex and uneven floor of the Gibraltar strait, in the teeth of flood-like strong currents. Debris from the Second World War, including mines and sunken battleships, had to be cleared away before the pipe could be laid.

Fears that the pipeline might

be the target of Algeria's Islamic

fundamentalists have been

played down by the Spanish gas

authorities. Experts say that

both government and opposition

in Algeria recognise the economic importance of the project.

However, last October Isla-

amic extremists decapitated

34 passengers in a bus stopped

at a false road check near the

gas field, and gas pipelines have

in the past been a terrorist tar-

get for those seeking to sabo-

tage the country's economy.

Years of fundamentalist vio-

lence, causing 60,000 deaths,

have not, however, discouraged

foreign companies from con-

tinuing to invest in the ex-

ploitation of Algeria's oil and

gas reserves. The fields are in

the southern Sahara area that

has been largely spared the vi-

olence of the north.

None the less, the Algerian

government has designated the

area around Hassi R'Mel "a

strategic security zone".

Up to 11.150



Under arrest: Delegates being taken for questioning by police after the Timor conference was broken up. Photograph: AP

Malaysian thugs wreck East Timor conference

Kuala Lumpur (Agencies) — Delegates to an international conference on East Timor yesterday told of their fear after their meeting in the Malaysian capital was broken up by government thugs.

Some 200 demonstrators from groups allied to Malaysia's ruling coalition barged into the meeting room, hurling chairs and tearing down banners. Police then moved in and detained 49 foreign delegates, expelling some of them.

Andrew McNaughton, convenor of the Australia East Timor Association in New South Wales, flew into Manila after he and 15 other activists were expelled. "They ran amok, overturning chairs ... and screaming ... They were extremely threatening," Mr McNaughton told Reuters. "I was

very frightened... A spark at any moment [and] it could have turned into a bloodbath... It was very frightening because these people were quite irrational."

About 20 police officers stationed outside the hotel where the conference was taking place did not stop the pro-government demonstrators from entering. The demonstrators tore down banners and hurled chairs and tables, ransacking the room for about half an hour. The protesters then retreated to the streets.

Among those arrested were a British journalist for the Hong Kong-based *Asia Week*, an Australian working for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and two local reporters. "This is shameful. It is not a good reflection of the people. It is sad," said Hilton Deakin.

Diplomats suggested other South East Asian nations were closing ranks behind Indonesia and Australia, and one of the delegations faced deportation.

Malaysia's Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim denied the youths acted with government sanction. But the government had warned that it planned to prevent the meeting from taking place. Malaysia feared the meeting, initially scheduled to last until Monday, would embarrass its South East Asian ally Indonesia. It is estimated that Indonesian troops killed at least 200 people.

■ Jakarta (AP) — The supermodels Claudia Schiffer and Naomi Campbell have opened their first Fashion Café restaurant in Asia. At the opening of the Jakarta branch, Campbell said that she loved Indonesia because its people were so friendly and broad-minded.

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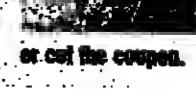
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How can 180 people eating lunch and shopping in Rome help these children?

Andrew Gumbel
Rome

In 1974, the United Nations held a World Food Conference at which Henry Kissinger, then US Secretary of State, vowed to eradicate world hunger within a decade. It did not happen, of course.

This week, the international community is meeting again for an even grander occasion, a four-day World Food Summit hosted by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation on behalf of some 180 national delegations. Despite the fanfare, its aim is markedly more modest than its predecessor's: this time, the pledge is to reduce world hunger by half over the next 20 years. But even that goal looks like a distant mirage.

Coming at a time of austerity among the rich industrialised countries, including big cutbacks in contributions to UN agencies, the summit has failed to extract a single commitment of cash, trading reform or agricultural policy shifts from any of the major donor countries.

Enthusiasm for the summit, already shaky in the wake of recent bashes on environment in Rio, population in Cairo, women in Beijing and habitat in Istanbul, has become virtually non-existent. "Hunger is a noble issue, but the fact is the world

is sick of mega-conferences and fork out money for causes that don't seem to be going anywhere," said one humanitarian aid official who knows the UN system well.

The "summit" tag has become something of an embarrassment, too, since almost none of the world's most powerful leaders are turning up.

With the exception of Italy, which is hosting the event, the rest of the industrialised world is sending agriculture or overseas aid ministers. Britain will be represented by Baroness Chalker.

The summit will leave about 100 Third World leaders milling around Rome with little hope of obtaining anything except for a few bagfuls of fashion purchases and some slap-up Italian meals on the side. The FAO's director-general, Jacques Diouf, has spent most of the past two years flying around the world persuading as many leaders as possible to attend, and has even secured international funding to cover their travel and hotel expenses. But for what?

"The whole thing will be a waste of time and money dedicated to the greater glory of Jacques Diouf," the humanitarian aid official complained, echoing sentiments shared by many non-governmental organisations and individuals within the UN. It is perhaps no accident that the

FAO has just suffered the first budget cut in real terms in its 50-year history and is now struggling to justify the sorts of expenditure that once made it a byword for bureaucratic, self-serving money-wasting within the UN system.

Skimming the draft declaration one comes across a plethora of phrases like the following: "If all partners at local, national, regional and international levels make determined and sustained efforts, then the overall goal of food for all, at all times, will be achieved." No clear idea is given of what these efforts should be, nor the type of body which could pursue them.

"You have to realise," said an FAO delegate who helped negotiate the declaration on behalf of the most important donor countries, "that this is not a blueprint for action, merely a symbol for the kind of action that individual governments could take."

A rather arcane aspiration for an major international meeting surely? "I don't think so," the world-weary diplomat responded. "What are words anyway except for symbols?"

The toothlessness of the document has less to do with the negotiators, though, than the structure imposed upon them. Jim Greenfield, director of the FAO's commodities and trade division, pointed to what he called



Hungry for action: UN pledges to eradicate world hunger, saving children like those in Liberia, have receded like mirages. Photograph: Reuters

a "real movement in perceptions" about the damaging effect of market price fluctuations on the hungry of the Third World, something which is at least acknowledged for the first time in the summit declaration. But of course the summit does not suggest ways to combat such fluctuations - that is the job of the World Trade Organisation, whose work this summit has agreed to leave well alone.

What little world governments all agree to, unfortunately, tends to be a blend of the interests of First World economies and Third World élites, at the expense of the true interest group - the billion or so people who are actually hungry. Thus the talk, just as in 1974, is of increasing production, developing high-tech agricultural methods to increase yields and encouraging more trade in food-

stuffs - "music to the ears of the big northern farming conglomerates, without enough emphasis on the small-scale production in the south", according to Christine Whitehead, a senior policy adviser at Oxfam.

The summit declaration says that primary responsibility for food security rests with individual governments, operating within a "market-oriented world trade system" - a vision that many see as disastrous. "In failing to address the inequity in the current balance of global food security," said Save The Children's food security adviser, John Seaman, "the summit is at risk of sentencing generations of the world's poor to a future where they will never have an opportunity for sustainable development because they are constantly engaged in a fight for survival."

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Nato to spell out new Bosnia force

Christopher Bellamy
Defence Correspondent

Nato will today decide on its plans for a follow-on force to help maintain peace in Bosnia throughout the winter: on its role, size, shape and how long it will stay. The chairman of Nato's Military Committee, General Klaus Naumann, will present the plans at a special meeting of Nato's ruling North Atlantic Council.

The mandate of the present force, I-For, currently 487,000 strong, expires on 20 December. The US had planned to have all its 15,000 troops out by then, but this was delayed until next March. US sources have continued to insist that all options remain open, including total withdrawal. The other three options are to station forces nearby, for example, in Hungary, from where they could be brought in if there was a crisis; for the force to stay much as it

is; or for a smaller force. President Clinton yesterday opened the door for a new mission in Bosnia with US participation. "There is some thought of a smaller, more limited mission, because economic reconstruction has not taken hold, and some tensions remain between the ethnic groups. If the mission is properly defined, I will consider it," he said.

Without US troops, no peace implementation force would be credible and it is expected that troops from the main contributors - the US, France and Britain - will remain in Bosnia in a pattern similar to their present deployment.

Unless there is a big surprise today, the new force will be headed by a US four-star general, William Crouch, head of Nato's Central European Land Command. His deputy will probably be British Lieutenant General Roddy Cory-Simpson, although the French will insist

on having someone of comparable rank in the Sarajevo headquarters. In place of three divisions, as now - one US, one British and one French - there will probably be three brigades of up to 10,000 troops.

The US recently moved in a 5,000-strong brigade of the 1st Infantry (Mechanised) - the "Big Red One" - ostensibly to cover the withdrawal of the 15,000 troops they have based in northern Bosnia. Similarly, the British have just moved 40 Armoured Brigade into their sector in west Bosnia.

Pale (Reuters). — Bosnian Serb political leaders, asserting control over an army in disarray, swore in new commanders yesterday after sacking indicted war criminal Ratko Mladić and other top generals. Obscure officers took an oath at a brief ceremony, officially sealing a decision announced over the weekend by Bosnian Serb President, Biljana Plavšić.

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Blair must take the plunge on voting reform

In the privacy of dimly-lit Westminster backrooms, the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties are nervously embracing. For months there have been cautious fumblings between consenting adults as the two main opposition parties explore their common interest in, above all, the reform of British politics.

Of the two, the Liberal Democrats are the more ardent and radical partner – not surprising, perhaps, in the smaller party, with more to gain – while new Labour is just a little more prudish. On many of the issues, they basically agree. These include the importance of Scottish devolution, of restoring some of the power of local government, of introducing new procedures in the Commons and reforming the Lords, and incorporating the European Convention on Human Rights into British law. There are differences about the details, and in some cases they are important differences. But, as on other issues, such as education, there is enough common ground for common positions to be articulated, should the party leaders wish.

The great question, however, is voting reform for the Commons. It is what most separates most Liberal Democrat politicians from most Labour ones. In the end, if Labour remain committed to the current system of choosing MPs, then that party's relationship with the Liberal Democrats can be no more than a flirtation. Given that Paddy Ashdown's party has been losing ground in local government by-elections recently, some Labour people will advocate a swift parting once Tony Blair wins his hoped-for majority. And for the Lib Dem alliance with Labour without significant progress towards a new voting system would be a sordid trap, leading nowhere. But what would be best for the country?

Voting reform is unlike many other

issues in that it cannot be honestly disengaged from the interests of the parties. The system has disproportionately favoured the Conservative Party, and it is not surprising that Tories are disproportionately in favour of it. Proportional representation would most boost the Liberal Democrats; the Lib Dems are enthusiastic boosters of PR. Everyone claims to support one or other system on the basis of principle.

These principles, taken one by one, sound fine. There is the principle that an elected Member should look after a single constituency, acting as advocate for all voters – a principle which many MPs endorse. That goes, too, for the principle that all MPs should be basically equal in status, elected as local representatives by these same constituencies. Those principles, taken together, point inescapably to the existing first-past-the-post system. But they are incompatible with the principle that each vote should have a similar value, and with the principle that the nation's choice, party by party, should be reflected in the House of Commons. So how should we choose, particularly when we know that the conflicting principles are, anyway, a disguise for party advantage?

It is a question of democratic priorities. We believe that in a country whose binding belief is fairness, restoring belief in the fairness of the voting system matters more than defending one-seat constituencies at all costs. (One-seat constituencies may be a British tradition, but like many of our traditions they are more recent than many people realise: the Victorians fought in multi-member seats and so did some pre-1945 moderns.) We also think that a country of avid and shrewd consumers, accustomed to wide choice, is fed up with the black-or-white, him-or-him choice offered by most constituencies.

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Even in swing constituencies, taken especially seriously by the party strategists, the choices can seem absurd. Why should one party be much less likely to have an overall majority? These would happen, yes. They do in almost every case where PR is used. But defenders of the status quo should ask themselves this: what have the past few years in politics been?

We believe that the present party system is essentially about pacts and conditions – only within the closed ranks of one or other party? The Conservative Party is the same coalition that, in other countries, exists between moderate Christian Democrats and hard-line nationalists.

Deals are made here, just as in Germany or the Netherlands, but they are made in the unit corner of the whips' office, not out in the relative open, between party leaders. Part of the malaise of modern British politics is that legitimate political differences within the main parties are submerged, so that any dis-

cussion or expression of them emerges as "split" or "division". Would it be worse for our country if the pro- and anti-Brussels Tories argued openly from different parties? Or if the socialist opponents of Tony Blair had their own small party in the Commons, rather than hiding their feelings and sniping from inside the Labour coalition?

The same argument applies to those who say that a fairer voting system would give undue influence to small parties, such as the Liberal Democrats, since they could control the balance of parliamentary power. Today, the anti-Maastricht Tories are just such a small, influential balancing group. So are the Ulster Unionists. So, in different circumstances, are the pro-monetary union supporters of the Chancellor.

We do not think that supporters of the present system are knaves, or that PR is a path to Heaven; judging voting systems is about effects, not ethics. But we think a change would reinvigorate our democracy, breathe new life into the Commons, and could be achieved without destroying anything essential in British politics. Given the disposition of political forces, it might split the Conservatives while only splintering Labour, and thus benefit Tony Blair at the expense of John Major. But if most people became disillusioned with Labour, or hostile to European Union, the balance of advantage would alter.

But favouring a new electoral system, as we do, is only the half of it. The next question is to bang out your preference as to which alternative system you prefer. Here too, non-party principles are the ariest guide. A "list" system which keeps single-member constituencies but adds a new class of appointed MPs from party lists to even out the differences, would give even more power of patron-

age to the party hacks and apparatchiks. It would allow MPs into the Commons who, freed of the need to respond to constituents, would become full-time careerists, instead of part-time ones. We prefer constituencies of two or three MPs, giving voters a much bigger choice and allowing into Parliament many strong voices that are not heard there today.

First, however, the argument for change must be won. And the person whose mind most needs to change is Tony Blair. He is the fulcrum. Probably, he will be in a position to make this happen, or to prevent it. As he contemplates the odd mating dance going on in Westminster with the Liberal Democrats, be can afford to lift his eyes. This is not just a sordid game between mutually interested parties. Between now and the election, Blair can move clearly towards supporting reform and help to bring about a fundamental shift in British politics. Or he can retreat to an essentially conservative position, and hope that he and his successors can find a way under first-past-the-post (frankly improbable) to banish Labour's record of defeat in the century to come.

That would be applauded by some Labour partisans as "putting the party first". In fact, it would be more likely to betray Labour's future. Given the likely effect of converting to voting reform – a Tory split, and a moderate centre-left alliance – Blair is in the happy position of seeing Labour's selfish sectional interests coincide with the interest of our democracy as a whole. He must, surely, be beginning to realise what he should do. The Labour leader is cautious, serious and straight. He is not a natural flirt with other parties in dark corners. But the time is close when he should do the decent thing: take a deep breath and lunge towards reform.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Execution of Saro-Wiwa flouted justice

Sir: Richard D North's extensive apology for Shell Nigeria ("Can you be sure of Ken Saro-Wiwa?", 8 November) leaves an unpleasant taste on the eve of the first anniversary of Ken Saro-Wiwa's judicial execution, and the long-delayed visit by Commonwealth foreign ministers to Abuja in a few days' time.

Breathtakingly, it ignores the fact that Saro-Wiwa and the other executed Ogonis never received a fair trial – a matter clearly set out by Michael Birnbaum QC and other international observers; that the Petroleum Minister had threatened punitive action against Shell and BP on 17 July 1995 (as reported by the CHRI mission of that month in Nigeria – *Stolen by Generals*); that the executions by General Abacha defied pleas for clemency by several Commonwealth leaders, which some thought had been heeded; and that Shell, responding to pressure from Amnesty and others, is now incorporating a human rights commitment in its business mission statement.

At a time when many international journalists are having difficulty in getting visas to visit Nigeria, such an unbalanced report – You can be sure of Shell – does a disservice to oppressed Nigerians and to the 52 other Commonwealth states which have rightly suspended the military regime from membership. If the eight foreign ministers visiting Abuja on 19 November were to depend as exclusively on a dictator's briefing as North has on Shell's, their view would be treated with distrust.

RICHARD BOURNE
Chair, Trustee Committee,
Commonwealth Human
Rights Initiative
London WC1

Sir: As a former Shell geophysicist, I have to say that Richard North's article defending Shell's role in Nigeria is so riddled with holes it's difficult to know where to start.

The underlying truth is that our consumer capitalist society is so dependent on fossil fuels that it is forced to extract them. Environmental and social concerns have been downgraded. The mounting effect of externalising these costs will undoubtedly rebound on us unless we shift soon to a sustainable way of life which utilises renewable energy sources.

The only reason that Shell "necessarily deals with authorities of which it strongly disapproves" is because the company group puts profits above ethical principles. Moreover, Shell's argument that if it were to pull out of Nigeria then "someone less committed would go in" is morally indefensible. The same excuse is made with no validity by Western companies and governments in justification of arms sales to oppressive regimes.

For North to move from an admission that "100 flares waste a resource equivalent to a quarter of France's gas demand" to the contention that locals benefit because the flares "contribute free light and a means of drying root crops such as cassava" is breathtaking in its crassness.

Shell spends less than 1.5 per cent of its profits on community



projects. As for Nigerian government funding of the local communities, Shell as much as admits in North's report that the political structure ensures that the locals of the Niger delta do not, indeed, cannot, benefit from Shell's activities there.

It's time the Royal Dutch/Shell Group lived up to its own statement of general business principles in its Nigerian operations.

This statement includes the promotion of "measures for the protection of health, safety and the environment for all who may be affected directly or indirectly by their activities". If Shell cannot uphold this then it should withdraw from Nigeria.

Dr DAVID CROMWELL
Southampton

Sir: I have been a regular reader of your newspaper since its first edition as I admired fair-minded reporting, so it was all the more of a shock to read Richard D North's appalling piece on the late Ken Saro-Wiwa.

The picture he paints both of Ken's character and motivation, along with the environmental state of the Ogoniland, is completely at odds with many detailed reports which have been done over the past few years, both by human rights organisations and respecting environmentalists.

Ken Saro-Wiwa was not a saint, I am sure, but he was an extraordinarily courageous man who sacrificed his own comfort and safety to campaign for justice for the Ogoni people. He died a truly terrible death after many months

of torture and near-starvation.

Ken was an Amnesty International Prisoner of Conscience and the recipient of the Right Livelihood Award and the Goldman Prize for services to the environmental movement. His case was also taken up by International PEN, Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace.

Can all these organisations be wrong and Mr North be right?

DIANA MORANT
London SW3

Right bank

Sir: Your correspondent, C.H. Standiford, must be sure of his facts before impugning the professionalism of the crew of the KLM flight 811 (letter, 9 November).

Aircraft arriving at Heathrow from the north-west and north-east normally route initially towards radio beacons at Bovingdon or Lamberne respectively.

From there air traffic control gives them radar vectors (headings to fly) towards the airport's instrument landing system beams.

The turn on to the ILS localiser beam is usually over the City of London. In other words, a right-hand bank over the City is the norm for traffic approaching from these directions.

J.S. EVANS
Chesham, Bucks

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL (Fax 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) and include a daytime telephone number.

Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

BBC viewing data clarified

Sir: The data published in our *Statement of Promises to Viewers and Listeners* about the range of programmes broadcast in peak time by BBC1, BBC2, ITV and Channel 4 was included in our Annual Report and Accounts published in July. This key performance indicator has been published now for three years in our Annual Report and Accounts without attracting challenge.

The criterion is that a broadcaster must transmit UK-made programmes in each category for more than half an hour in an average week at peak time, that is between 6pm and 10.30pm. The measure is stringent and designed to reveal what the range is across an average week over the year. It is applied fairly; for instance it appears as if BBC1 does not broadcast any natural history programmes. Of course we do, but not to the extent to meet the criterion.

However, we should have stated the criterion for inclusion and how the calculations are arrived at. We will correct this in a further print run.

The plain fact, however, is that last year the BBC broadcast a wider range of UK-made programme types in peak time throughout the year than ITV and Channel 4, and so we should, given our unique method of

funding. We are committed to be more accountable; that means that we must provide evidence of our performance. We will continue to do so, as our licence-payers expect.

COLIN BROWNE
Director of Corporate Affairs, BBC
London W1

Stripped ski piste is eco-rape

Sir: Well done for shedding light on the environmental problems of skiing ("Whatever happened to green skiing?", 2 November).

However, the "canny initiative" reported at Les Arcs of stripping the piste of topsoil, removing the rocks, and replanting with hardy alpine grass, is not what I would call an environmental solution.

The plants that had naturally colonised the piste over thousands of years have been replaced with a monoculture of one species. This is not conserving biodiversity. The "environmental" benefit seems to be that less snow needs to be "made".

However, we should have stated the criterion for inclusion and how the calculations are arrived at. We will correct this in a further print run.

I hope this does not become "good practice"; please do not encourage it by calling it an environmental initiative.

NICOLA DAVIES
Swindon, Wiltshire

Schizophrenia no cause for guilt

Sir: You report (1 November) on research based at the University of Oulu in Finland. A long-term study of over 12,000 people beginning before their birth showed that children born after unwanted pregnancies were at slightly increased risk of schizophrenia in adult life.

The scientific report of this work stressed that the meaning of this curious finding is obscure. Mothers may have had a variety of reasons for not wishing to be pregnant.

These include suffering themselves from illnesses which increase the risk of schizophrenia in their offspring, probably by subtle effects on the developing brain.

This Finnish study has demonstrated that early physical illness in the newborn may also have this effect; this may be preventable.

Several parents of people with schizophrenia have contacted me, feeling upset and guilty. The inference they drew from your report was that their own children must have been unwanted and unloved. In fact, the research showed quite the contrary; most people with schizophrenia were wanted babies.

I spend a great deal of time helping relatives of those with this distressing and puzzling brain illness. The seeds of schizophrenia may sometimes be sown early in life, but not by parents; it is not their fault.

Dr P.B. JONES
University of Nottingham

Oxford dows fear for green space

Sir: John Patten, in his article about the School of Management Studies at Oxford University ("Lucie made the spires what they are", 9 November), completely misrepresents both the issue under debate and the reasons why so many voted against the proposal.

The question of whether Oxford should or should not have a School of Management was not in question; this has been part of the university's plan for some time. Neither was Mr Said's generosity. The speakers on both sides of the debate fully supported the school and gratefully acknowledged Mr Said's gift.

The issue being debated was whether the school should be on a particular site, and one that had been sold to the university 30 years ago on condition that it was to remain a "green space" in perpetuity.

Those who voted against the motion did so for three main reasons. Firstly, that the site should remain unbuilt on, as was agreed when it was bought; secondly, that the site was offered to Mr Said, and a design for the building decided on, without sufficient consultation with all the university and college bodies concerned; thirdly, that it appears that the governing body of the proposed school would have only a minority representation from the university, with the majority being appointed by Mr Said.

The speakers against the motion were concerned not only with preserving one of the ever-decreasing areas of green space in Oxford's city centre, but also with keeping good faith with the conditions of sale of the land, and with issues of open government within the university. STEVE ROBERTS Oxford

Sir: I have nothing to do with Oxford or business schools, but I read with dismay the letter from the President of Magdalen College (8 November). He says that:

"Oxford values its democracy more highly than its short-term reputation". If less than 40 years ago, the Congregation gave an undertaking to leave the site green "in perpetuity", why on earth is it trying to go back on its word? Perhaps the Oxford Dictionary has a different definition of the word "perpetuity" from the rest of us.

MARCUS MURPHY Brussels

Fine Euro-king

Sir: Richard coeur de lion (letters, 4, 5, 7 November) was a European par excellence. The admiring French mark his campaign trail against their king with red rampant lions on gold shields, and the Germans valued him highly enough to keep him captive in one of their castles. For his part, Richard raised English taxes for the rebuilding of Chartres Cathedral while fighting the French king, and together with Blondel took troubadour songs to Germany long before the Beatles. French-speaking and French-educated, Richard cannot have understood a word at Westminster. Give the chap a break and send him to Brussels.

MARGARET DAOINE Ramsey, Cambridgeshire

essay

Thank God for the gays

The Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement commemorates its 20th anniversary in Southwark Cathedral on Saturday. The backwoodsmen are predictably enraged. But, argues Paul Vallely, traditionalists could learn much from those they seek to condemn

So the gay orgy in the cathedral is back in the news. Next Saturday's service in Southwark's Anglican cathedral to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement was condemned at the weekend by church backwoodsmen for "promoting promiscuity and blasphemy". A survey of churchgoers linked to the theologically conservative Evangelical Alliance yesterday claimed that 96 per cent of British congregations believe gay sex to be wrong. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, blustered into the debate to insist that just because gays were being allowed into a cathedral didn't mean that the Church of England was about to alter its muddled stance on homosexuality.

"The survey is evidence that a vast number of churches stand by 2,000 years of biblical analysis which concludes that homosexual sex is outside the will and purpose of God," said the Reverend Clive Calver, director-general of the alliance. It is not just the opinions but the vehemence with which they are expressed that has taken the rest of the country by surprise. Until the *Thought for the Day* contributor Anne Atkins launched a vituperative broadside against the event on Radio 4 last month, most of us had assumed that the Church was slowly coming to grips with

the inconsistency of its attitude to homosexuality. But the prejudices clearly lie deeply embedded in the woodwork of the nation's pews.

It is hard to justify. It is true that the Old Testament denounces homosexual acts as "an abomination", along with bestiality and incest. But it says the same thing about nudity, eating pork and prawns, and wearing garments made out of more than one fabric. It is not clear what is Mr Calver's stance on cotton and polyester shirts or Bird's Eye Fisherman's Pie, but he has not been noticeable in his insistence on the Levitical punishment of death for both parties caught in adultery.

"Abomination" is, anyway, a mistranslation; the Hebrew refers to a violation of ritualistic purity. (Sodomy is another oft-uncorrected misconstruction; most biblical scholars now say that the sin of Sodom was not pedantry but inhospitality to strangers.) On what basis do the biblical fundamentalists select some bits of Leviticus to interpret literally and not others?

The New Testament does not help much. In the Gospels, Jesus never mentions the subject, though it is specific or other detailed issues of morality. Those who accept St Paul's condemnation of homosexual lust do not necessarily accept his other culturally specific injunctions. Believe Paul literally and you will accept slavery,

demand long hair, require wives to be subservient to their husbands, and never criticise the government (Paul, remember, expected the end of the world within his generation). You would also insist that "women should stay silent in church" – not an injunction to which the volatile Mrs Atkins seems ready to acquiesce.

The fact is that the mainstay of Christian opposition to same-sex relationships rests on tradition. Its core is the principle of the natural law which the early Church drew, using the philosophical tools of the pagan Aristotle and the Stoics, from observing the world around it and inferring that how the world was is how God intended it to be. The central purpose of sex, it therefore pronounced, is procreation.

Many early churchmen, such as St Augustine, followed St Paul in thinking sex a shameful activity at the best of times – virginity and continence are the highest callings. Certainly any deviation from the procreation end was therefore, well, deviant.

But the suppositions that underlay natural law were culturally specific, too. It viewed sexuality in terms of the welfare of societies rather than individuals. It also assumed, as did

the Bible, that everyone was heterosexual and that a few perverts chose to ignore their true nature out of wilful lust. There was no such thing as homosexuality, only homosexual acts.

Much has changed since then. Although the Protestant reformation kept procreation as the primary purpose of sex, it also emphasised that friendship and intensity of love should exist between spouses, and said that sex had a key role in cementing their relationship.

The social and political thought of the Enlightenment began to construe the rights of the individual as being as important of those of society.

After Freud, sexuality came to be seen as a profound stratum of the personality, not merely a genital activity. More recently, empirical scientific research has suggested that either some people are born homosexual, or at the very least, their basic sexual orientation becomes relatively fixed in early childhood, usually before the age of seven, without any conscious choice on the individual's behalf.

Even the Catholic Church

shows that they accept that the majority of their sexual acts are not about procreation but must be judged by criteria of love and the bonding of mutual pleasure. Even the Vatican has moved substantially. In 1975, Rome made a distinction between two kinds of same-sex acts. Some were due to a lack of normal sexual development, or were freely chosen through bad example. But others, it said, were victims of a pathological condition which was incurable.

It did not seem a statement of marked liberalisation. But the formidable, intellectual armoury of the Vatican was brought to bear on the issue with remorseless logic. In 1986, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the ultra-conservative watchdog of the Church's doctrinal orthodoxy, pronounced that what is inborn is morally neutral; homosexual orientation, therefore, was blameless; only acting on it was blameworthy. His pronouncement was entitled "On the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons".

It was a dramatic development. In Catholic moral theology, "person" is a term that constitutes a profound moral statement about the humanity

dignity and worth of the individual. Homosexuals, like everyone else, he said, were "made in the image and likeness of God".

All the nature vs nurture arguments were superseded. From that basis, an emerging gay theology, along with feminist critiques of the patriarchal institutionalisation of sexuality, is now pressing towards an acceptance that homosexual relations and acts are intrinsically no less valuable than heterosexual ones.

"It would be a very cavalier

and capricious" God who created people a certain way and then instructed them that they were forbidden from fulfilling the potential they have been given, says the Rev Richard Kink, secretary of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement. "So why do they then say: 'Yes, you can be members of the Church, but only so long as you shut up, go round with a long face, cringing or deeply depressed'?"

Most churches continue to maintain this distinction between acceptable orientation and unacceptable practice – except for the Church of England, which goes one step further by saying that the laity can live in faithful homosexual relationships, but the clergy can't. "To be made gay," says Kink, "is not automatically to have been given the gift of celibacy."

At this point the arguments of the conservatives turn from theology back to instinctive prejudice. It is only female sexuality that socialises the male, and without it we are left with the rampant irresponsibility of the unmarried fathers of the "underclass", or a gay subculture which is caricatured as seedy, promiscuous and beffing, without any thought as to whether such characteristics are inevitably those of a group unable to live openly and therefore driven underground.

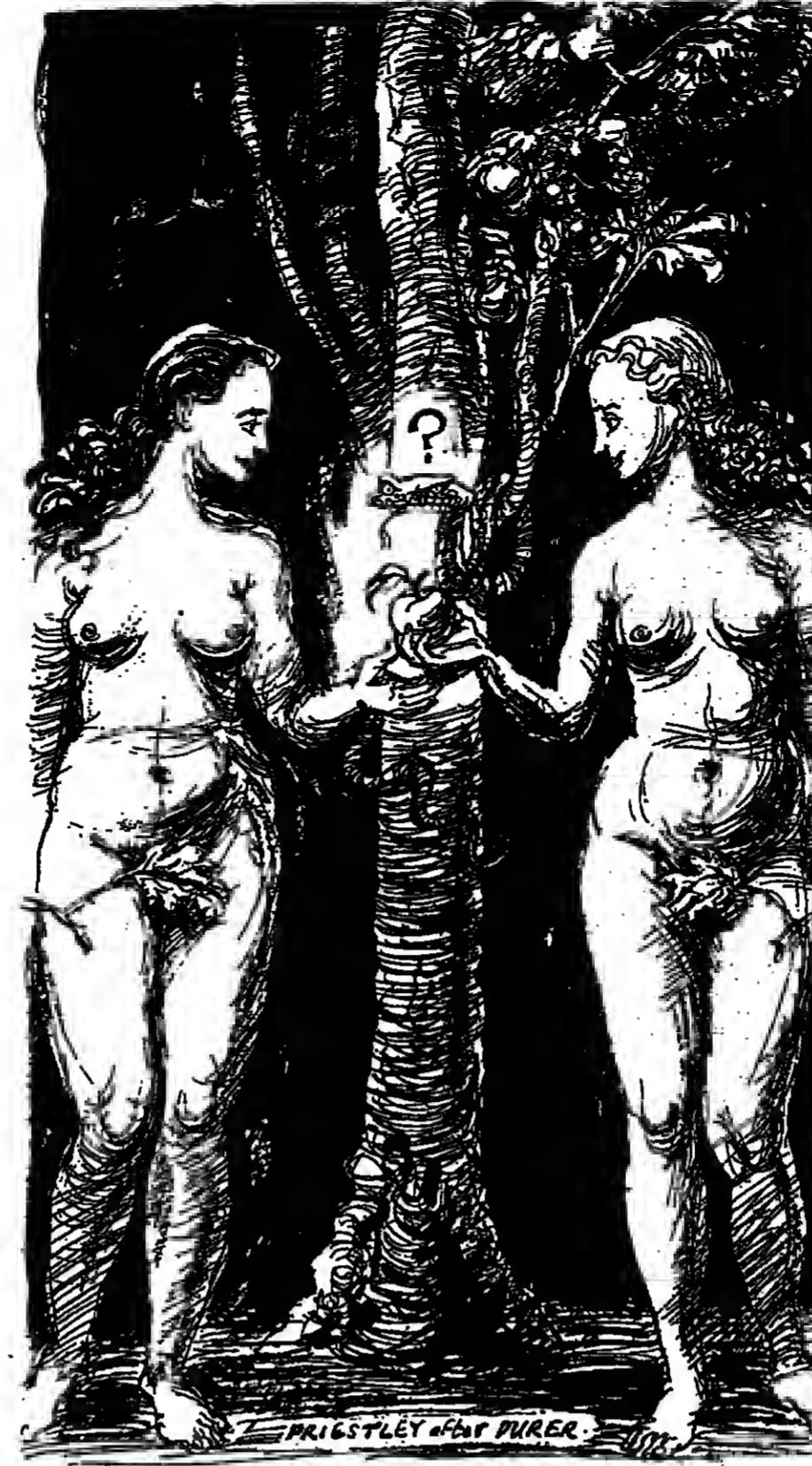
The old joke is pertinent here:

Q: What do homosexuals do in bed? A: Eat biscuits and listen to Radio 4, mainly, like everyone else.

There is still an obsession among many traditionalists with the mechanics of homoerotic sex, as though genital acts rather than relationships were at the heart of the identity of a person whose sexuality is not hetero.

Lesbians have begun redefining sexual relations in terms of friendship in a way which could re-enrich marital relationships. "Both the Gospels and church tradition present us with a paradigm of friendship – Ruth and Naomi, David and Jonathan, Jesus and his group of male disciples – in which dynamics of mutuality replace traditional ones of submission and dominance," she says. "When we get to heaven, gay people will be more at home; because in heaven, we are told, there is no marriage."

It is a field in which work is only beginning. Yet if it bears fruit, the Church may be forced gratefully to acknowledge that though homosexuality – like celibacy – is self-evidently not right for everyone, it is a good job that someone is blessed with it.



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The only way to start the week



Miles Kington

Every Monday morning there is a programme on Radio 4 called *Start the Week*, which most of you miss because you have been at work for two hours or are still in bed, so I have programmed the mighty computer here at *The Independent* to produce a representative sample of the programme, compressed from one hour into three minutes. Any time you feel deprived of *Start the Week*, just pull this out of your wallet and read it to yourself. Bragg: Hello. Plenty to talk about this week, as we have with us in the studio a

geneticist, sadly not Steve Jones, but Professor Brian Bingham, who has written a new book called *Programmed for the Millennium*. We have Roger Graft, whose 43-part TV programme *A History of Peace* starts on BBC1 on Monday. We have Melina Vassentype, who is giving a lecture somewhere tomorrow on "The Potato as a Feminist Issue", and:

Jonathan Miller, who is in a cab somewhere between here and Ealing. We also have Rubella Hastings from *The Guardian*. Professor Bingham, it's always nice to have a scientist on the programme...

Bingham: Why is it?
Bragg: Well, because as an arts chap who has always been over-obsessed with dead writers, I became aware in mid-life that I knew nothing about science, which has had such an effect on our century, and as it was too late to learn much in a meaningful way about science, I thought I could at least invite a few scientists on this programme and hope a bit would rub off.

Bingham: Then why not say so?

Bragg: Tell the listeners what it is about.

Bingham: In my book

Programmed for the Millennium, I have put

forward the theory that time has a great deal more effect on us than anyone has suspected. We always destroy the habit of carving history up into decades, as it seems quite arbitrary, but I think that the human mind reacts to the end of a decade and draws a mental line before going on to a new chapter. Decades are different from each

century. Centuries do have a different

flavour from each other.

Bragg: That's fascinating.

Can you give us an example?

SOUND OF A DOOR OPENING. ENTER DR JONATHAN MILLER.

Miller: Anyone got £20 for a cab? We came through Harlesden by mistake.

Gosh, thanks.

DOOR SLAMS.

Bragg: I know everyone is dying to get in here. Melina Vassentype I have always found time fascinating. I find it fascinating that a Briton and an Australian can have a concept of last Thursday even though they refer to totally different times. We are asleep when Aussies are awake and vice versa, so in a real sense we don't share experienced time at all.

Bingham: Then why not say so?

Bragg: Tell the listeners what it is about.

Bingham: In my book

Programmed for the Millennium, I have put

forward the theory that time has a great deal more effect on us than anyone has suspected. We always destroy the habit of carving history up into decades, as it seems quite arbitrary, but I think that the human mind reacts to the end of a decade and draws a mental line before going on to a new chapter. Decades are different from each

century. Centuries do have a different

flavour from each other.

Bragg: We weren't talking about cognition.

Miller: That's strange. You usually are at 9.28.

Bragg: Roger Graft, why a history of peace? What's wrong with war?

Miller: There's nothing wrong with war. It makes really good television. But there is more peace than war, always has been, and I am trying to get us to look at history in terms of peace. We love war, so we talk about the Great War, the 14-18 War. But why don't we talk about the Great 1918-1939 Peace?

Bingham: What war?

Bragg: With respect, Professor, that's my line on this show. Rubella?

Hastings? Hi.

Bragg: Hi. Now, Melina, why the potato and feminism?

Vassentype: Why not?

Bragg: Jonathan, do you want to come in on this one?

Miller: Which one?

Bragg: Well, we could go on talking about this all day but, sadly we haven't got time.

Next week it's a physicist, a historian, a friend of mine who has made a TV series and Taramasala Dryden from *The Observer*.

Goodbye.

Welcome to the war of the working week



Andreas Whittam-Smith
All the other EU states already impose limits on working time

Get ready for the next Euro row. It will concern how many hours we may work each week and what our minimum holiday entitlement must be. The rumour is, as expected, the Government learns that its legal challenge to the 48-hour week directive adopted by the European Council of Ministers in 1993 has failed. Stated baldly, the directive provides for a maximum working week of 48 hours; it sets a minimum of four weeks annual paid holiday and lays down minimum rest periods and rest breaks.

The dispute goes to the heart of Europe's agony over unemployment. The Anglo-Saxon view is that regulation costs jobs, and the legal limits on working hours and legal holiday entitlements are just such an example. To our European neighbours, on the other hand, the working-time directive appears an unexceptional measure. They have always had such legislation. Every one of the other 14 members of the EU already imposes limits on working time; likewise, all but Italy have legislated for minimum holidays.

Neither Conservative nor Labour governments have ever acted on these matters. British practice has been completely different. On the Continent wages are high, work forces are more skilled and better trained and personal taxation is less onerous, but companies bear heavy social costs and it is difficult and expensive to make people redundant. In contrast, our labour markets are characterised by low wages, skills improving from a low base, long hours and light regulation.

Until the mid-1980s the Continental system paid off in terms of success in world markets, employment and standard of living. No longer. In Germany and France unemployment is at record levels and still rising, while our trend has been downwards for some time. The Anglo-Saxon model is now the more successful.

Entwined in the economic argument, however, is a dispute about the UK's legal obligations. The fact is that the origin of the working-time directive is the Single European Act, signed by Mrs Thatcher, which paved the way for the Single Market. Member states agreed to encourage improvements in the health and safety of workers and to harmonise such regulations. The British government had no alternative but to sit down and negotiate the directive with its partners.

In this dispute it is crucial to understand that major changes to the original draft were secured. Qualifications, let-outs, derogations written into the directive, have largely taken the sting out of it. Member states may choose not to apply the working-week provisions to managers, to the family members of family businesses, or to the self-employed. In addition, industries exempted from many of the provisions include sectors where there is a need for continuous working, from hospitals

to electricity production, and industries with seasonal peaks of activity such as agriculture, tourism and postal services. More sweepingly, the directive also gives individual countries the right not to apply the provisions of the 48-hour week, provided that individual workers agree and that refusal is not subject to pressure. And the entitlement to four weeks' paid holiday per year need not be introduced straight away. As a result, when the revised draft was put to the European Council of Ministers in November 1993, the British government did not vote against the measure; it abstained.

But it found another way of attacking the directive. It argued that the measure had been brought forward under an inappropriate article of the Treaty of Rome; it was not a health and safety measure where a majority vote could carry the day but a matter of employment rights, where unanimity is required. This is the basis of the Government's appeal to the European court of Justice, whose judgment will be handed down tomorrow.

Of course the UK has had health and safety regulations since Victorian times, and has regularly updated them. Legislation itself, and custom and practice, have varied according to the nature of individual industries. Hours of work are controlled for safety reasons in industries such as transport. The British approach has been ad hoc. But generally speaking, shorter hours have been seen as an alternative to higher wages and as a measure for sharing work. No compelling evidence has been pleaded to show that shortening hours of work below their present levels would significantly reduce health and safety risks.

Faced with losing the case, the Government is preparing to turn to a third strategy. As it did in the BSE crisis, albeit unsuccessfully, it will use our veto on other matters to attempt to force our partners into giving us a special opt-out from the working-time directive. Mr Major claims to have received a sympathetic hearing from the French president, Mr Chirac. In any case, most of the Cabinet believe that anti-Europe campaigns will vote.

This is likely to be worthwhile rather than counter-productive only if the directive as it stands would reduce employment. The longest hours are worked in mining and quarrying, agriculture, forestry and fishing, followed by transport and communications. Managers, people in professional occupations and plant operatives also put in long hours. Between 30 and 45 per cent of workers in these categories clock up more than 48 hours a week. But few of these examples would be affected by the directive. Neither the Confederation of British Industry nor the Engineering Employers' Federation are making a big song and dance. As they are not, I don't believe the British government should do so. In a way, it has already won.

The sound of a herd of moralisers following family values through the Palace of Westminster continues, day after day. When it reached a climax during the debate on the new divorce law the Government promised to Do Something. Last week, finally, it did. But after all that huffing and puffing, it was a pathetic something, because in the end, locking people into marriage is not something governments can do.

The Lord Chancellor announced a "major programme to support projects aimed at preventing marriage breakdown". What will it do? "Marriage organisations are being invited to bid for extra funds with ideas for reducing the incidence and cost of marriage breakdown." How much money is in this fund? Something above £250,000 but under £500,000. The marriage-saving quid pro quo for easier divorce turns out to be very few quid indeed. For all the moral sound and fury, the Treasury remained unconvinced that any more money would be well-spent.

Now that 40 per cent of marriages come to an untimely end, a tidal wave of moral panic is engulfing us. But the amount of money the Canute-like Government has just come up with is worth about one sandbag.

Government figures show that divorce costs the Exchequer £4bn a year, mainly in social security and legal aid. The poor are some four times more likely to divorce than rich couples, and it is their divorces that cost the taxpayer.

Since 1948 the government has partly funded marriage guidance, but waiting lists for counselling often stretch to six or eight weeks. The London Marriage Guidance Council is desperately over-stretched, counselling 5,500 couples a year but with a "horrendous" waiting list of 900 couples and a deficit of £150,000.

Bizarrely, the Lord Chancellor said that public lack of knowledge about the service was a problem, and called for schemes to publicise it. Some Relate regions are keen to set up drop-in centres – but that would cost serious money.

There is a great shortage of counsellors, who are highly trained but unpaid volunteers. To recruit many more, they would need to be paid, but by whom? Clients pay according to their means: each session costs £40 but more than half the clients pay far less.

The Lord Chancellor is look-

A government divorced from reality

by Polly Toynbee



Maybe if George and Martha had seen the 'catchy, interesting, relevant' marriage video, things would have worked out OK

ing for "innovative schemes", but plainly he wants them cheap, a lot cheaper than counselling. One government idea is an "interactive, multimedia" approach. Would you go into a booth and answer questions about your marriage on a computer screen? Telephone help-lines are another proposal, hit people would still need to come in for counselling.

The Government is keen on what it calls a "catchy, interesting, relevant" video. Darn good fun, telling people in a relevant way about the problems that might arise in marriage. It would be given out free at churches and register offices to people getting married.

This idea comes from Gary Streeter, the minister responsible for the Marriage Task Force – who, incidentally, gained his promotion through a reshuffle following the distinctly non-family-values activities of Rod Richards, the married MP caught in flagrante and obliged to resign. God works in mysterious ways.

Gary Streeter was converted to Christianity in 1979 at a Charismatic house church. He calls for the church to lead a moral revival. Entering marriage, he says, "should be like William the Conqueror burning his boats [sic] – an irrevocable life commitment". Talking of his own marriage,

the secret, he says, is "recognising the difference between women and men. Men tend to be more logical, women more instinctive. If couples recognise that they don't speak the same language then they can understand each other. A man will say 'Why do you think that?' A woman will say 'I don't know why, I just do'. Communication is the key".

Divorce, he says, is a symptom of "our quick-fix culture, the selfishness of modern society and the absence of a framework of love and discipline". It's plain as a pikestaff that in the early years it is mothers who have a special relationship with their children. It is foolish to try

'Press reports were rather bad: 6,097 killed'

On Armistice Day, one of the last eight survivors of the naval battle of Jutland tells his tale



On 21 November 1918, ten days after the Armistice, I witnessed the surrender of the German High Seas Fleet at sea. By then I was a lieutenant on HMS *Wessex*. We went out to meet them half-way, fully manned and ready. Everyone was uncertain about what was going to happen.

Out of the mist on that sunny day it really was quite a sight to see them coming towards us. As the German flag was hauled down at sunset to the sound of a bugle, Admiral Beatty was given a round of cheers by all of us in the Grand Fleet. We escorted them to Rosyth and later round to Scapa Flow.

Then we spent a lot of time as guard destroyers looking after their destroyers and smaller ships.

That whole period was really rather dicey for us. You weren't allowed to fraternise and we knew their morale was very poor. I remember going slowly past one of their destroyers whose crew, as always, was trying to barter with us to get some food. I saw a sailor go up to an officer and pluck the Iron Cross off his coat and offer it to us for some cigarettes. The officer could do nothing.

On 21 July 1919, we were having a gin before lunch when a sub-lieutenant ran into the wardroom and shouted "The Germans are abandoning ship". We thought at first he was being funny, but we rushed up on deck and indeed they were abandoning ship, every ship. In fact they were scuttled.

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In the early part of 1916 I joined HMS *Bellerophon* as a "wart" junior midshipman. On our first day we were given a good sound dozen lashes by the sub-lieutenant, so from day one we knew our place and what would happen if we stepped out of it. I was 15.

On 31 May 1916, we guessed something was up. We knew nothing, we just had a feeling. I was positioned in the 12-inch turrets working the Dumas course and distance calculator. We went into action some time after 5 o'clock. We were kept very busy in the turret and I reckon *Bellerophon* fired about 100 rounds of 12-inch. It was very noisy. At one point we were told we had sunk a German destroyer.

During a lull we came out of the turret to get some fresh air; and there, floating around us, was a whole mass of bodies and debris. Some of our sailors were cheering because they thought they were Germans, but unfortunately they were from HMS *Invincible*. It was a terrible sight and my first experience of death.

For the night action I was on the bridge, which, looking back, was exciting for a young midshipman. We continued firing into the early hours, then disengaged. We didn't really know what had happened until we got back. The press reports of the battle were rather bad: we had lost 6,097 killed. I had lost 13 of my team of 80, one of whom was Anthony Eden's youngest brother. The ship went into a bit of depression for a few days, but we all suffered it together because we got no leave. We simply went back into routine patrols of the North Sea.

I spent my first Christmas Day in the Navy coaling ship, starting at 5.30am and finishing at 6pm. We were

Allied Domecq searches for a tonic to improve its dismal performance

Shares of Allied Domecq have the dubious distinction of turning in the weakest performance of any of the drink giants. The group could be accused of staggering from one mishap to another, often outmanoeuvred by its major rivals.

The Teacher's Scotch whisky in Beefeater gin group is due to roll out results tomorrow. If they are not disappointing the stock market will be suspicious. It is, however, the accompanying trading statement and any hint new chairman Sir Christopher Hogg gives about Allied's future direction which will capture most attention.

Allied, created in the late 1950s when three leading breweries indulged in a defensive merger in challenge the activities of a Canadian takeover marauder, is in the process, Whitehall permitting, of retiring from the beery by selling its struggling Carlsberg Totley arm, still the third-largest brewer in the country.

The group, it could be argued, has squandered its once-proud brewing heritage and must now rely on its retailing and spirit operations.

It had been hoped that Sir Christopher would take the

catalogue of woes include a £147m loss in a foreign exchange fiasco, splashing out around £700m for the Pedro Domecq brandy and sherry business just before its major market, Mexico, went in sharp decline, and selling off its food division at mostly disappointing prices. It could also be argued it mimicked its departure from brewing. If it had followed the Greenalls example and quit before the Beer Orders were enforced, it would have avoided having to sell puts at bottom-of-the-barrel prices during the recession.

There is a feeling the market has not fully appreciated the belated retreat from brewing. It will, sooner or later, free Allied from what is regarded as an onerous price agreement

adopt a more focused approach. It would also offer a fresh start, perhaps giving Allied the opportunity to throw off the impression that it is an accident-prone group.

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There is a feeling the market has not fully appreciated the belated retreat from brewing. It will, sooner or later, free Allied from what is regarded as an onerous price agreement

with Carlsberg Tetley and allow the chain to buy pubs – perhaps mounting a bid for a high-profile retailer.

Ironically, Sir Christopher's

STOCK MARKET WEEK

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

likely to fall victim to a takeover bid; possibly a break-up exercise. Tomorrow's yearly profits are expected to come out at £560m, before the ravages of exceptional costs. Last year the group produced £645m.

British Steel is another profitless. It managed to courtail, splitting the group into chemical and textile operations.

The two Courtialis companies have survived as independents. There is, however, a strong belief that Allied's spirits side would quickly fall victim to a takeover bid, probably to Guinness, although Grand Metropolitan could be interested.

Peter Lucas and Nick Williamson at Credit Lyonnais Laing believe Allied's break-up value is around 550p a share against 484.5p on Friday.

Allied is clearly in the last chance saloon. If its performance does not improve it is

suspects. Nine-month figures from General Accident should emerge at around £310m (£350m) and Commercial Union should produce £345m, down from £383m.

BT, with second-quarter profits, is another in retreat. About £680m is the guess against £732m last time. The telephone giant, another where mere figures are overshadowed: in its case by the giant merger with MCI, the US group. Since scoring an early gain on the deal its shares have given ground as it has come under pressure in some quarters over the merits of such an ambitious and costly jump into a highly competitive market.

Societe Generale Strauss Turnbull is a voice raised in support of BT Analysis John Tynan and Andrew Moffat say: "The merger shifts the company's focus away from the narrow restrictions of the UK market on to the world stage at a time

when the market is embracing the concept of competition for the first time. There is a huge opportunity in the domestic USA as that market prepares for full competition."

BA, the airports group, flies in with interim figures today. A modest advance to £303m is forecast by NatWest Securities. Still, with its regulatory pricing regime settled for the next five years, a relatively low political risk factor and an increasing flow of income from unregulated operations, it should have an encouraging future.

The group's more aggressive approach was illustrated by its unsuccessful bid for the duty-free operations of Alders, the department store chain. It was outpriced by Swissair. There are suggestions it could become more involved with Alpha Airports, where Harrods chief Mohammed Al Fayed last week picked up the 25 per cent interest Granada inherited from Forte and put up for sale.



Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.

Other details: Ex rights x Ex-dividend a Ex all United Securities Market's Suspended Source: FT Information

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FTSE 100 - Real-time 00 Sterling Rates 04 Privatisation Issues 36

UK Stock Market Report 01 Bullion Report 05 Water Shares 39

UK Company News 02 Wall Street Report 20 Electricity Shares 40

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Interest Rates

UK 800s Germany Discount 20% Japan 85%

France 320s Canada Discount 50% Belgium 05%

Italy Discount 52%

Spain 47%

Central 30%

Netherlands 75% Discount 50%

10-Day Repo 67%

Switzerland 21 High Street Banks 40%

Sweden Discount 40%

London 42%

Repo (Adv) 40%

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business & city

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BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER



Patrick Ponsolle: Annoyed by share price movements

France asks SFO to investigate Eurotunnel shares

Magnus Grimond

The Serious Fraud Office said yesterday it would investigate alleged insider dealing in Eurotunnel shares following a request by the French authorities to Michael Howard, the home secretary.

Eight or nine of Britain's leading banks and financial institutions are said to be at the centre of the probe, amid claims that insiders are profiting from

privileged information about the Anglo-French Channel tunnel operation.

As well as dealing a further blow to Eurotunnel shares, the controversy looks set to further tarnish the reputation of the City, which is still reeling from scandals involving improper trading at Morgan Grenfell and Robert Fleming.

A spokesman for the SFO, James O'Donoghue, said yesterday: "The Serious Fraud Of-

fice has agreed to investigate, on behalf of the French authorities, allegations of market manipulation in Eurotunnel shares."

But he said Britain's top anti-fraud body would not launch its own investigation. "We do not have grounds to investigate market manipulation on a domestic level. You have to remember that the bulk of shareholders in Eurotunnel are French, and most dealings in Eurotunnel have taken place in

Paris, rather than in London, so it's not surprising that the focus should be over there." The inquiry, which follows a visit to the UK by French fraud police last week, will be led by Chris Dickson, who heads overseas investigations for the SFO.

Sir Alastair Morton, the former British chairman of the group, and his French opposite number, Patrick Ponsolle, have complained vociferously and publicly about volatile move-

ments in the share price, which they claim resulted from leaked information and rumours started by market operators. The company welcomed the inquiry.

The SFO denied that it was acting under political pressure in taking on the case, despite its admission that it did not have enough evidence to launch an investigation on its own. It emerged over the weekend that the London Stock Exchange has already looked into dealings in

cash call, but appeared to get nowhere. However, in September the Swiss authorities were brought in and, according to a newspaper report yesterday, the French are pointing the finger at "suspicious operations" involving banks in Geneva and Zurich.

The SFO has wide powers to interview people and recover documentary evidence in the pursuit of an investigation, which does not have to relate to frauds committed within its jurisdiction.

CBI conference: Warning for Eurosceptics as poll of business shows growing support for EMU

Industry says yes to single currency

Michael Harrison
and Chris Godsmark
in Harrogate

Business leaders last night predicted that Europe would move to a single currency in 1999 as a survey showed that industry was backing Britain's participation in economic and monetary union by two to one.

Adair Turner, director general of the Confederation of British Industry, said: "If anything, business is moving in a more European direction."

He was speaking as the CBI published a poll of 1,700 business leaders on the eve of its annual conference in Harrogate showing that more than half of firms - 56 per cent - supported EMU in principle while 30 per cent were opposed.

Business leaders were also increasingly in favour of Britain being in the first wave of monetary union. The proportion of firms who thought the pound should enter a single currency in 1999 had gone up from 19 per cent a year ago to 28 per cent now.

Sir Colin Marshall, the CBI's president, said he believed there would be a single currency in 1999 and that Britain should not rule out the option of joining.

"The single market is of vital importance to our future success and while there is still a split in views over EMU there is little enthusiasm for ruling it out as an option," he said. "To reject it now would give us no say as to how the Euro coin eventually falls."



Facing up to it: Adair Turner, the CBI director general, shows his Prince's Trust mask at the start of the conference. The masks will be auctioned for charity in London at the end of November

Photograph: John Houlihan/Guzelian

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, is expected to move Labour towards a more pro-business stance on Europe when he addresses the conference today. Mr Brown will tell delegates that Labour would oppose any extension of qualified majority voting on Social Chapter legislation. "I can assure you that not only do we have no plans to

extend qualified majority voting in these areas, but we would veto any attempt to do so," he will say.

The CBI/BCC survey, carried out in November by Mori among 5,000 businesses, shows that only 10 per cent of businesses back a single currency outright, believing it essential to ensure the competitiveness of

UK business. However, there is an even smaller minority of just 7 per cent of firms who say that Britain should reject a single currency point blank.

Sir Colia said the results disproved claims that business had become more Eurosceptic over the past year. He also rejected suggestions that the business community was split over EMU,

saying: "Business and industry across the country and across the spectrum from large to small enterprises are in favour of the move to EMU and a single currency."

But he refused to be drawn on whether the CBI would throw its wholehearted support behind Britain's membership of the first phase of EMU. The employers' organisation is to begin a mass consultation exercise among members immediately after the conference with the aim of making a firm recommendation in the middle of next year after the election.

The CBI added that it did not approve of member states fudging the figures in order to qualify for EMU. But it said that while Britain was unlikely to meet the requirement to less than 3 per cent of GDP, it was much more important that it met the target of limiting overall debt to 60 per cent of national output.

Taking the train can be a strain

The captains of British industry tested out the country's newly-privatised rail network over the weekend - but found that when it comes to getting there you cannot beat the motor car, writes Michael Harrison.

His InterCity 125 arrived at Newark station in Nottinghamshire and stayed there for two hours. Passengers were eventually told that vandals had stolen the signalling cable between Newark and Retford.

An alternative route was plotted via Lincoln but by then Mr Turner, travelling with his personal assistant, had had enough of the railways. He marched outside the station, jumped into a mini-cab and ordered it to take him the remaining 80 miles to the Moat House Hotel, Harrogate.

The taxi fare was £80, a sum Mr Turner intends to claim back. He can either send the

claim form to Jim Sherwood, whose Sea Containers Group owns Great North Eastern Railways, or Chris Garnett, brother of Heritage Secretary Virginia Bottomley, who runs the business. But one word of caution.

The privatised rail operators are not obliged to cough up a penny in compensation when the cause of the delay was not their direct fault. Some things never change.

£1.3bn US bid for East Midlands

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent



Dominion Resources, the US electricity and gas company, is expected to launch a formal £1.3bn takeover bid for East Midlands Electricity this morning.

Last night Dominion's UK advisers, investment bankers SBC Warburg, were believed to be putting together the financing touches to the offer with their US counterparts, buyout specialists Wasserstein Perella.

The bid will probably value East Midlands shares at between 630p and 650p, giving a price range of £1.25bn to £1.3bn. The shares closed on Friday at 595.5p.

The takeover bid will be the second by a US company for a privatised regional electricity company in the space of two weeks. Northern Electric is fighting a £760m all cash offer from CE Electric, which is ma-

jority owned by the American power generator CalEnergy. If both bids are successful, it will leave just three RECs still independent: London, Yorkshire and Southern.

Despite the fact that Dominion has been eyeing the company since the summer there has been no formal request for a meeting with East Midlands' directors, including the chairman, Nigel Rudd.

An informal approach was made by Dominion last week but until now contacts have been between City advisers. "We will make contact when there's a bid," said a Dominion source. Analysts have suggested

that a potential bidder would have to pay around 670p a share, though Mr Rudd is unlikely to recommend any bid at the outset unless it is closer to 700p, representing a price of around £1.2bn. Dominion, with 1.9 million customers and sales last year of \$4.65bn (£2.8bn), is similar in size to East Midlands. The UK company is widely thought to have been one of the best managed RECs in recent years, having slashed its workforce by almost 40 per cent since privatisation six years ago.

The biggest question mark hangs over the attitude of the regulatory authorities. Fund managers who control most of the shares believe the Government will block both bids on the grounds that they would leave too few stock market quoted RECs to use for efficiency comparisons. The growing uncertainty has hit the share prices of East Midlands and Northern.

According to sources at ITV and ITN, agreement was with-

in reach late last week. The contract puts an end to several years of uncertainty for ITN, which has been dogged by ownership questions and a putative bid by Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB to wrest the ITV contract away.

Under the terms of the Broadcasting Act, no single company can own more than 20 per cent of a "nominated news supplier," of which ITN is the only one. Following the takeovers of Central Television and LWT by Carlton and Granada respectively, the two ITV giants ended up with 26 per cent each of ITN.

Carlton and Granada agreed to sell their entire stakes to Lord Hollick's United News & Media and Daily Mail & General Trust, in a deal that valued ITN at £99m. The price of the agreement was a lower per-year price for the main ITV news supply contract.

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STOCK MARKETS						
FTSE 100						
Index						
Class	Week's chg.	Change (%)	1995 High	1995 Low	Today	
FTSE 100	-391.80	-37.7	-1.0	4073.10	3632.30	4.03
FTSE 250	4395.60	+33.6	+0.8	4568.80	4015.30	3.55
FTSE 350	1953.40	-18.0	-0.9	2022.10	1816.80	3.93
FTSE SmallCap	2158.84	-8.6	-0.4	2244.85	1954.06	3.15
FTSE All-Shares	1929.51	-17.0	-0.9	1994.54	1791.95	3.87
New York	6219.83	+197.9	+3.3	6219.83	5032.94	2.15
Tokyo	21201.04	+568.0	+2.8	22666.80	19734.70	0.77
Hong Kong	12751.18	+221.8	+1.8	12775.47	10204.87	3.28
Frankfurt	2739.63	+56.6	+2.1	2738.63	2253.36	1.72

INTEREST RATES						
UK interest rates						
US interest rates						
Money Market Rates						
Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term (6)	Year Ago	Long Term	6/3 Year Ago
UK	6.06	6.81	7.67	7.88	7.78	7.99
US	5.28	5.58	3.27	5.93	6.58	6.33
Japan	0.44	0.58	2.71	2.98	-	-
Germany	3.06	3.25	5.82	6.38	6.78	-
Bond Yields *						
Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term (6)	Year Ago	Long Term	6/3 Year Ago
UK	5.06	6.81	7.67	7.88	7.78	7.99
US	5.28	5.58	3.27	5.93	6.58	6.33
Japan	0.44	0.58	2.71	2.98	-	-
Germany	3.06	3.25	5.82	6.38	6.78	-
Main Price Changes						
Index	Top 5	Price %	Wk Chg	Wk Change	Falls - Top 5	Price %
Ntn Ireland Elec	357.5	32	9.8	Senior Eng/Eng 114.5	10.5	8.4
East Midlands Elec	593.4	49	9.0	British Sky Broad	522	47
National Power	433.5	28.5	7.0	Cookson Group	208.5	18

Source: FT Information

CURRENCIES						
£/\$						

science

Bees could put the sting back into pesticides

The natural immunisation of pests against chemicals has been unravelled, reports **Bernard Dixon**

There is nothing new about treating a human or other animal with a chemical to eradicate a harmful microbe from the body; it happens whenever a doctor prescribes an antibiotic to combat an infection. But scientists in India have achieved almost the opposite. They have protected bees against a chemical – an insecticide – by inoculating them with bacteria that break it down. Their discovery, the first report of the use of microbes to decontaminate a living creature, may have important applications in agriculture.

Microbes have a remarkable capacity to attack otherwise toxic chemicals, a fact already exploited in environmental cleansing. Biotechnologists have rendered several contaminated sites safe, either by introducing bacteria into the soil to break down pollutants or by stimulating the growth and activity of those already there. An example is the abandoned Greenbank gas works, near Blackburn.

In at least one very different context, microbes capable of attacking chemicals are less beneficial. Bacteria are suspected of being responsible for providing disease-carrying insects such as mosquitoes with resistance to the pesticides sprayed on breeding grounds. In some cases the insects acquire the capacity themselves, through mutation, to withstand insecticides or to produce enzymes that break them down. But bacteria on or inside insects also appear to play a significant role. One report showed microorganisms living on the surface of blowflies were capable of destroying the pesticide dieldrin.

With this in mind, Dr Y S Sharma and colleagues at the Dr Y S Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry in Solan, India, investigated further. Their first step was to discover that certain honey bees became vulnerable to the insecticide carbaryl when treated with antibiotics. Were the bees normally unaffected by carbaryl because they harboured bacteria that normally render the pesticide harmless? And did the antibiotics make the bees susceptible to carbaryl by killing these protective bacteria?

As reported in this month's *Journal of Applied Bacteriology*,



Bacteria may be helping mosquitoes resist pesticides

both suppositions proved correct. First, the researchers studied honey bees already known to be resistant to carbaryl. They found that they contained at least three types of bacteria which, when transferred to laboratory glassware and grown in the presence of carbaryl, broke down the insecticide. One was *Enterobacter aerogenes*, another was a species of *Citrobacter*, and the third could not be identified. All were dedicated degraders of carbaryl, able to grow on it by using it as their sole source of energy and carbon.

In a second set of experiments, the researchers set out to find out what concentration of the antibiotic streptomycin would destroy the bacteria inside the bees without harming the bees themselves. The tests established that, as the bacteria were killed, so the bees became vulnerable to the insecticide. The compelling conclusion from the two sets of results was that normally the microbes were indeed protecting the bees against carbaryl.

A third group of experiments put the matter beyond question, and suggested applications of the discovery. Sharma and his colleagues grew pure cultures of the *Citrobacter* species, *Enterobacter aerogenes* and the unidentified organism in the laboratory and then inoculated them into other bees to see whether this enhanced whatever capacity they had to withstand the insecticide. In every case, introduction of the bacteria greatly increased the bees' tolerance towards carbaryl. Each of the microbes was effective, but the highest degree of protection came when the three were introduced together. This indicates that they act in concert to promote the most efficient breakdown of the insecticide and thus render the bees insensitive to its ill effects!

One possible application of these findings is in situations where crops require pollination, yet the blossom has to be treated with an insecticide to prevent insect attack. In this case, bees inoculated with strains of bacteria designed to boost their resistance to the relevant pesticide could be used to ensure pollination.

The obvious risk with an approach of this sort is that the bacteria might be transferred from beneficial bees to destructive pests, enhancing their resistance to pesticides. But Sharma believes this danger could be sidestepped by modifying the microbes so they fulfil their protective role in bees but fail to grow and thus become established in other insects.



Heaven scent: Clara Ursutti's ICA Installation Pheromone Link is a nasal dating agency with the slogan 'Love is in the air – just follow your nose'

Photograph: L. J. Howell

On the scent of love

It was the smelliest artwork on display at the Institute of Contemporary Arts. Part of the Toshiba Art and Innovation show was a push-button blower dispensing four different examples of human body odour. Interactive, too – there were cotton armpit pads to collect samples of one's own smell, T-shirts (or rather, sweatshirts), and a pile of questionnaires.

The complete kit amounted to the first dating agency to attempt to match partners by their smell. It is called Pheromone Link, and the artist, 28-year-old Clara Ursutti, a graduate of the Glasgow School of Art, plans to advertise it in newspapers and magazines. Volunteers will receive a welcome letter that says: "Love is in the air – just follow your nose!"

Pheromones are biochemicals that signal our sexuality to others. Everyone has a unique pheromone signature; ask any police dog. If you want to question whether Pheromone Link is art or science, ponder this: we may not know much about pheromones, but we know what what we like.

The four odours on offer at the ICA – two male, two female – smelled neither human nor alluring to me. But I perceived faintly across a crowded room, any one of them might have had a galvanic effect. Nor could I tell them apart, except for the pungent "strong male". Ms Ursutti was reassuring: "You can state your sexual preference on the questionnaire," she said.

Her other olfactory artworks, "self-portraits in scent", have been wafted electronically inside an airtight booth at an art exhibition in Glasgow and distributed on bits of blotting paper in Edinburgh, Aberdeen and at last year's Venice Biennale, where they were available from vending machines. "I'm not arrogant enough to think I can come up with an aesthetic of smell," she says. "But smell

each other's body odour. There's an odour conversation between them. That is what is meant by 'sexual chemistry'. But before now it has never been worked out scientifically."

Some people, he says, have clear and unambiguous smell preferences. But to help identify body odours that couples can agree they like, he will also use not only his own trained nose and those of a panel of experts, but the "electronic nose" that he has developed. It has 12 electronic sensors, mimicking the thousands of sensors in the human nose, and can come up with an olfactory fingerprint of human pheromone samples presented to it. "For the first time," he says, "we will be able to match even extreme types of

human pheromone." Think of it next time you embark on choosing a perfume, or even an artwork, for a loved one.

Dr Dodd has already developed a synthetic human pheromone booster, the Pheromone Factor, produced by the Kiotec company, available by mail order (0990 120134) and advertised on the Quantum company's TV shopping channel. He says: "It can revitalise your pheromones and recreate the pheromone kick you had when you were 20."

"The output of pheromones starts with puberty, peaks in the late twenties, then diminishes. Reduced sexual activity and incompatibilities in sexual drive, he says, "will be able to match even extreme types of

pheromones of the person we're talking to. It's this third crucial stage that results in absolute success or failure, because if we can't detect their pheromones, we probably won't find them attractive."

Dr Dodd has discovered that the seven families of human pheromones correspond to the aroma of the foods traditionally considered aphrodisiacs: truffles, caviare, shellfish, champagne, beer, ripe cheese and vintage wine. And: "I speculate until I'm firmly that the body odour and find attractive in a sex object had never is that of our own we always

He is attempting to sell when I pheromones to all for this fight, pheromones related to sex than ever diet and smoking, big partners arts he looks forward to, smelly operates, expressing to supplied with smelly chance savour Bitez's fic worked for me, Carmen, they anything else I'd like of Puccini's heavyweights followed by a comb over, Mike, down too, so word for dinner, are to fear?"

experiences in the ring that Tyson had not into the head since he three years in prison of the four men he had fought landed a se - possibly field. The initiative the tattoo prove ger to be rough



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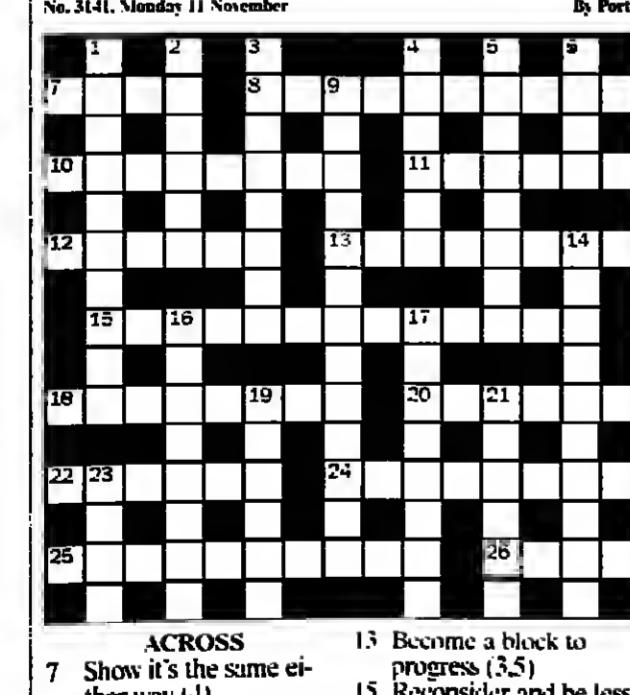
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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3141. Monday 11 November
By Portia



25. Swirling rain comes, engulfing one group of Pacific islands (10)
26. An age going round the Northern college (4)

DOWN

- Roman city said to be in ruins (10)
- Attraction of a ring, say (6)
- Withdraw support after work (4,4)
- Meantime furnishes little room (6)
- Well-balanced as a group (8)
- Boss remained within hearing (4)
- Disagreeing with deal Reg has got arranged (2,11)
- A story involving female pupil causes trouble (10)
- Point out narrow shaped implements (8)
- Dutch explorer possesses element of charm (8)
- Elected to serve and produce plan (6)
- Deceive Greek character about setting (6)
- Utter spell upside-down (4)

ACROSS

- Show it's the same either way (4)
- Present sum is expensive no matter what (2,3,5)
- Bloomer's made by Henry receiving rise (8)
- Firm date? (6)
- Girl in the hostel lashed out (6)
- Become a block to progress (3,5)
- Reconsider and be less disapproving (5,6,2)
- Warn Greek guy about money before end of the month (8)
- Clear wet fish (6)
- Bird, three quarters done in stone (6)
- Perfect construction in grammatical terms? (8)

Published by News Paper Publishing PLC, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.
Back issues available from Hutton Newspapers 0800 906 609
and printed at Merton Colour Print, St Albans Road, Watford
Monday 11 November 1991
Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office

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